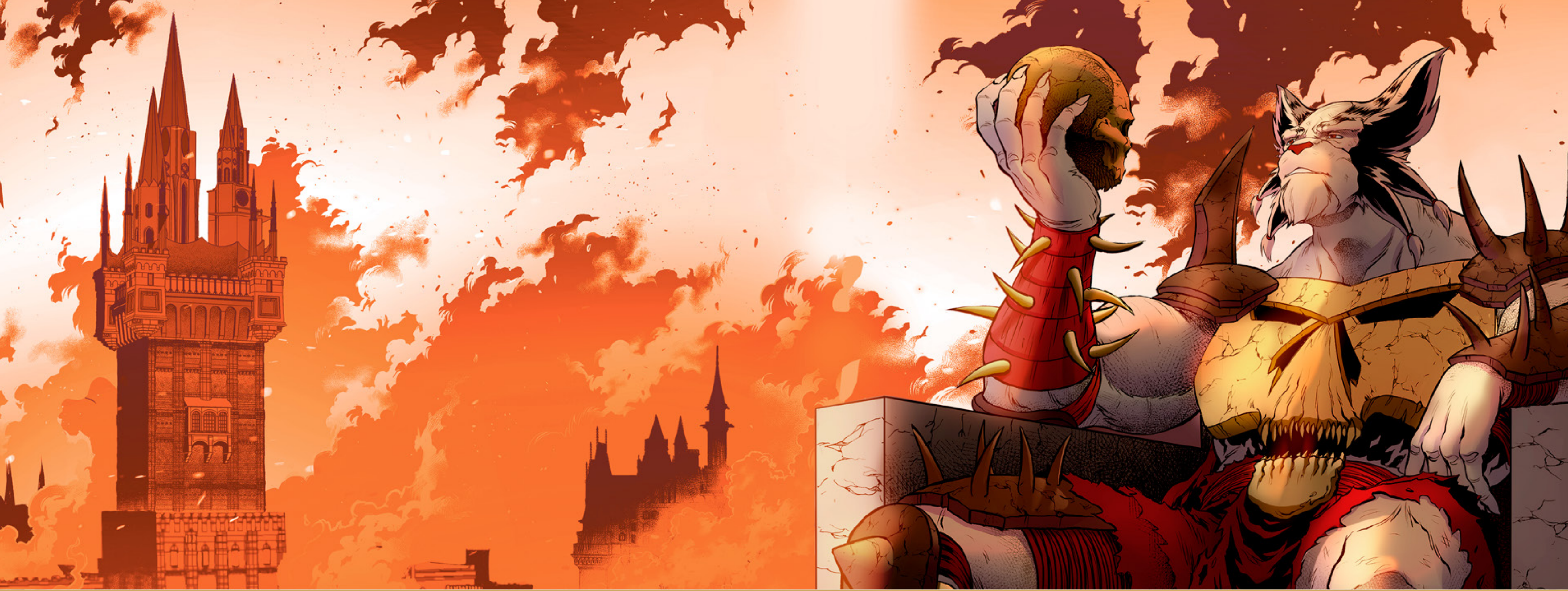
BATTLECATS®

VOL 3: HERO OF LEGEND

LONDON - CAMELO - TEKINO - ZAPATA



BATTLECATS®

VOLUME THREE:
HERO OF LEGEND

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RORINCLAW

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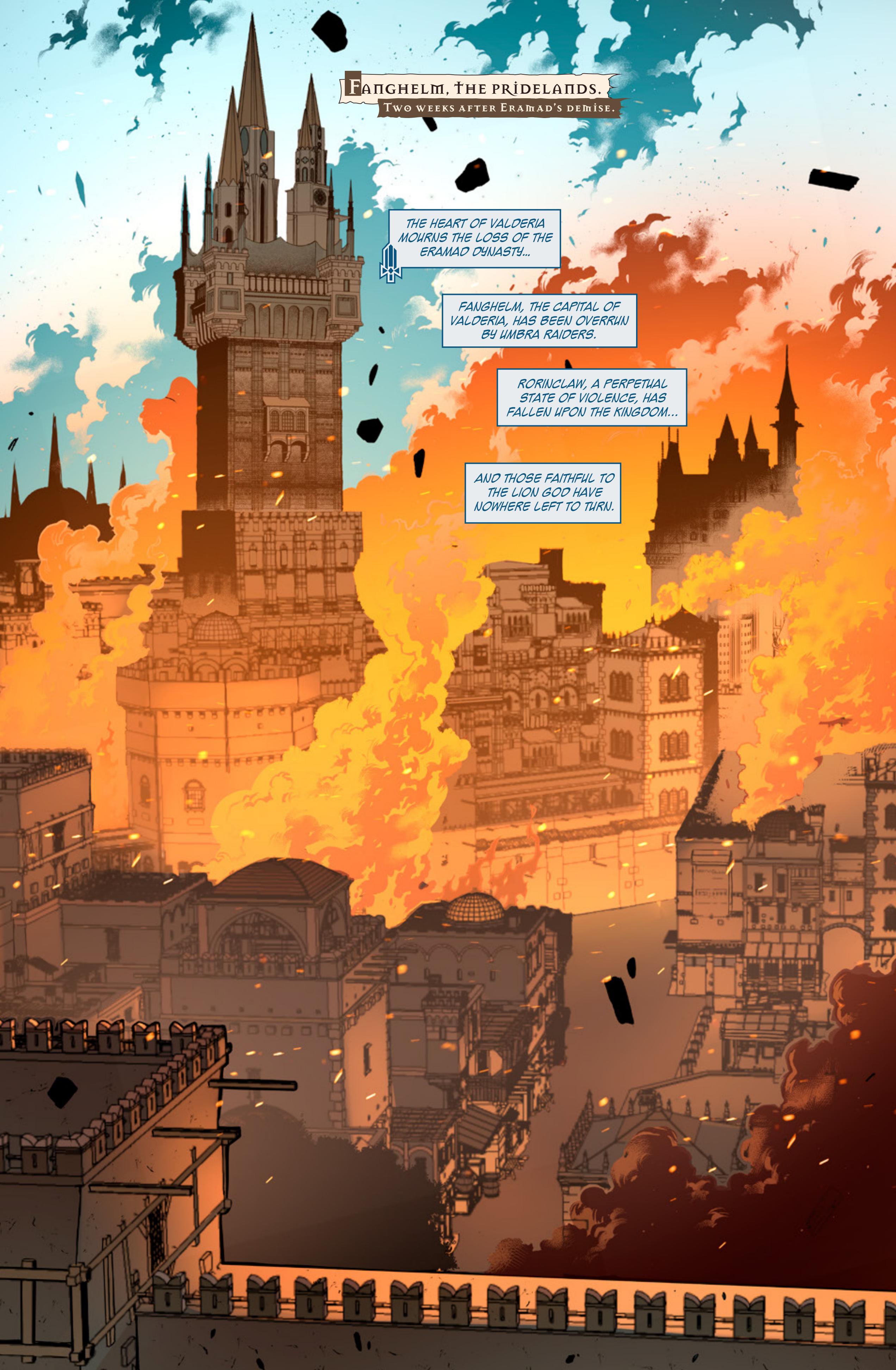
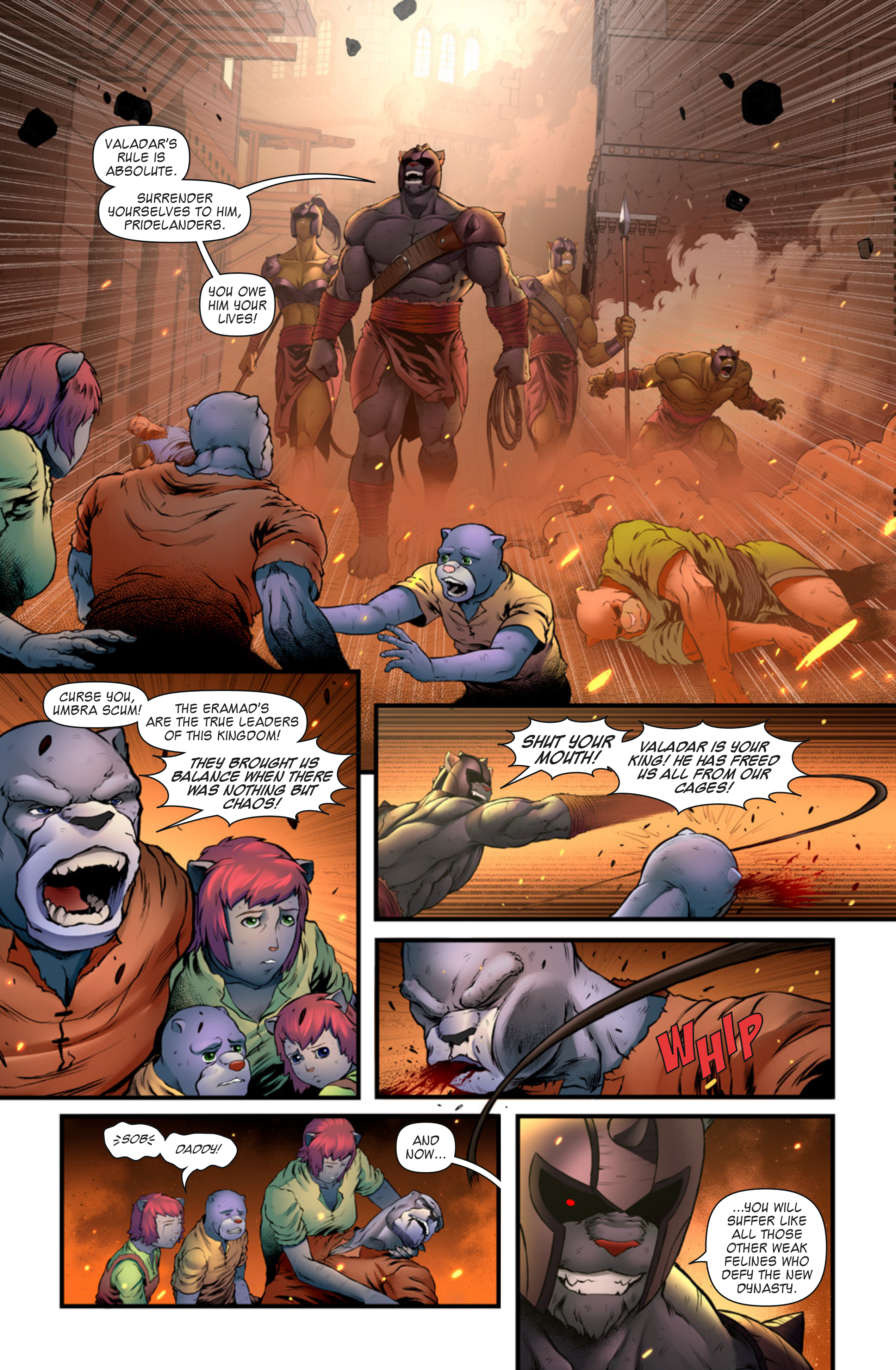
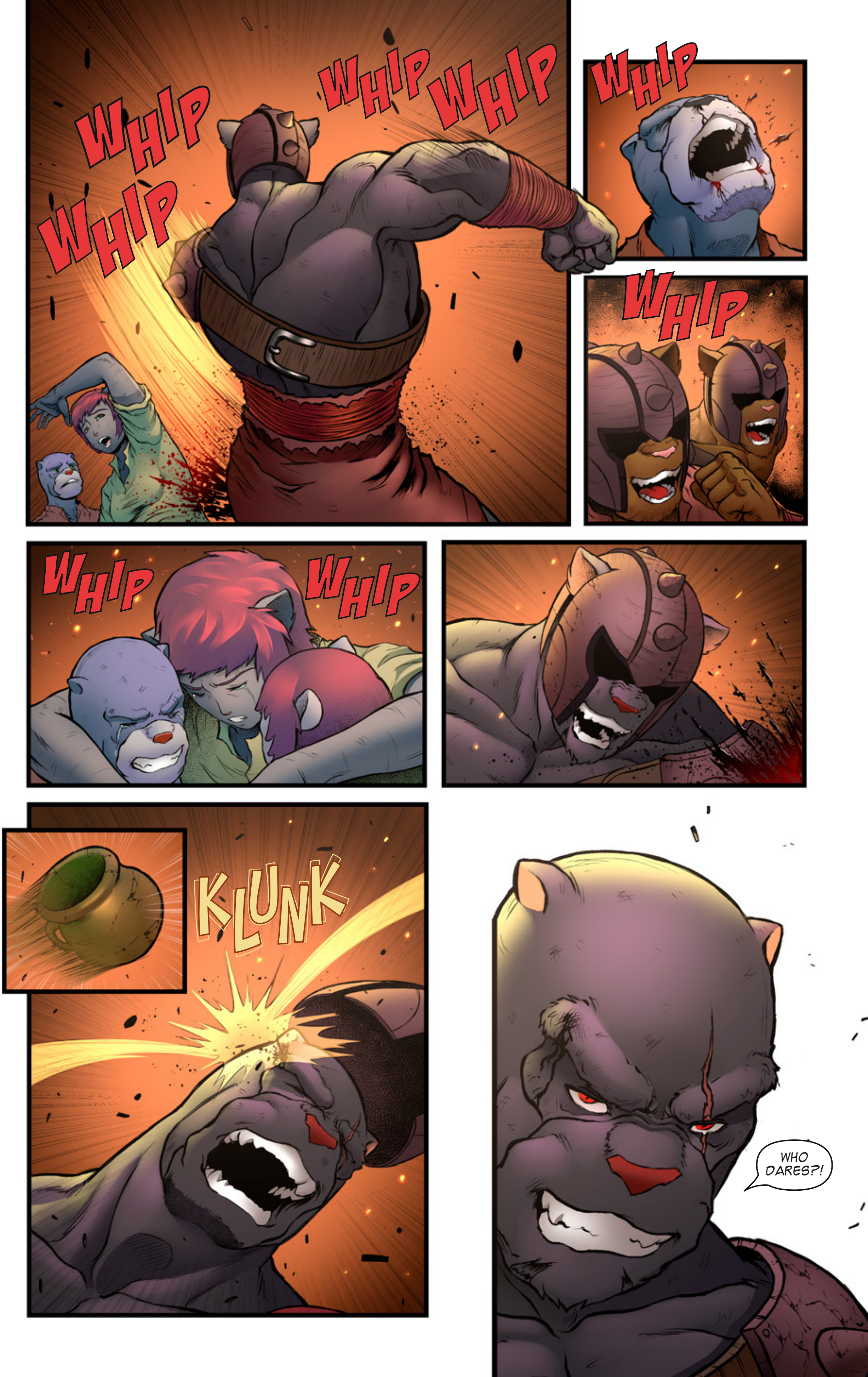
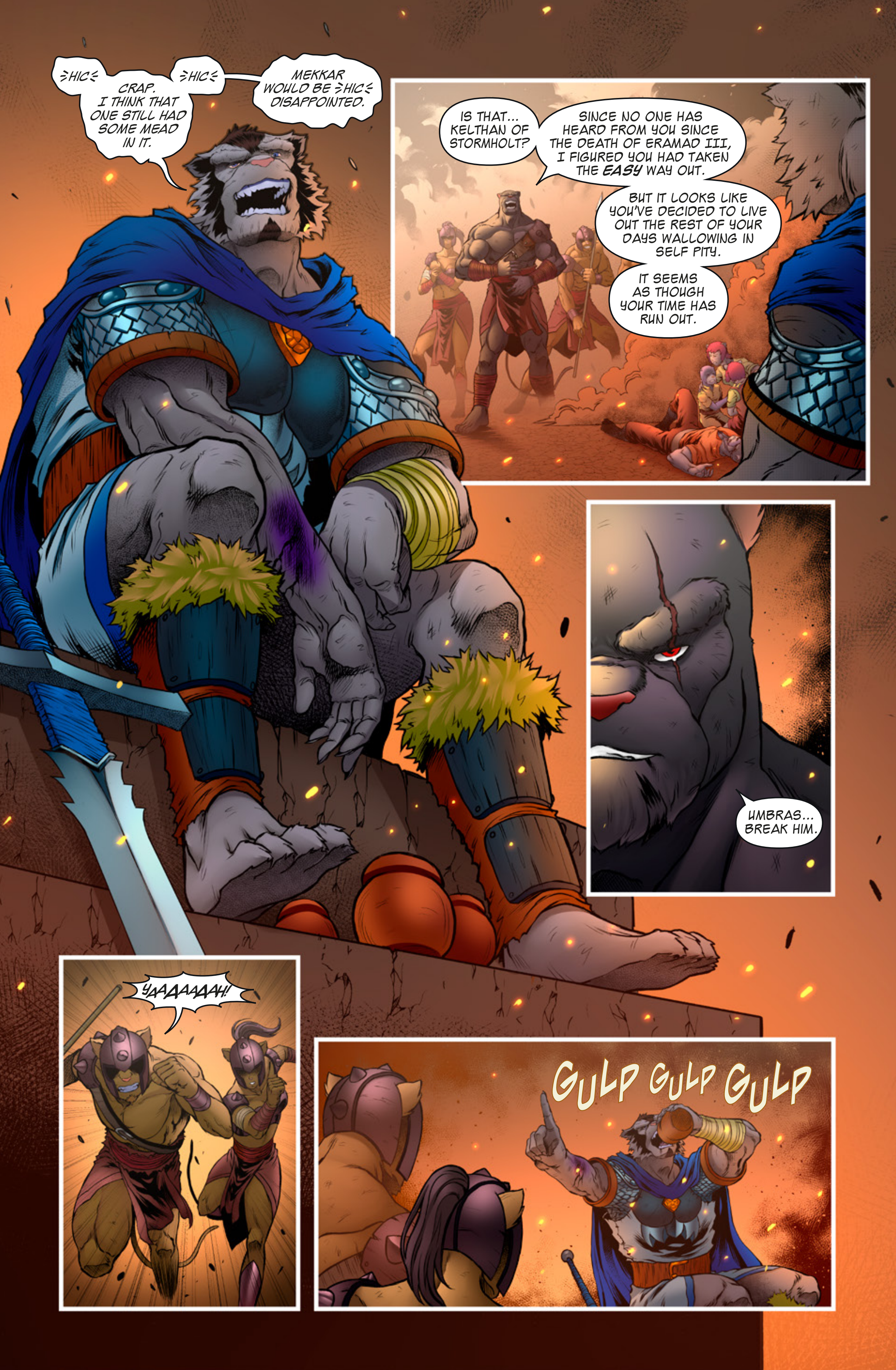
Chapter One

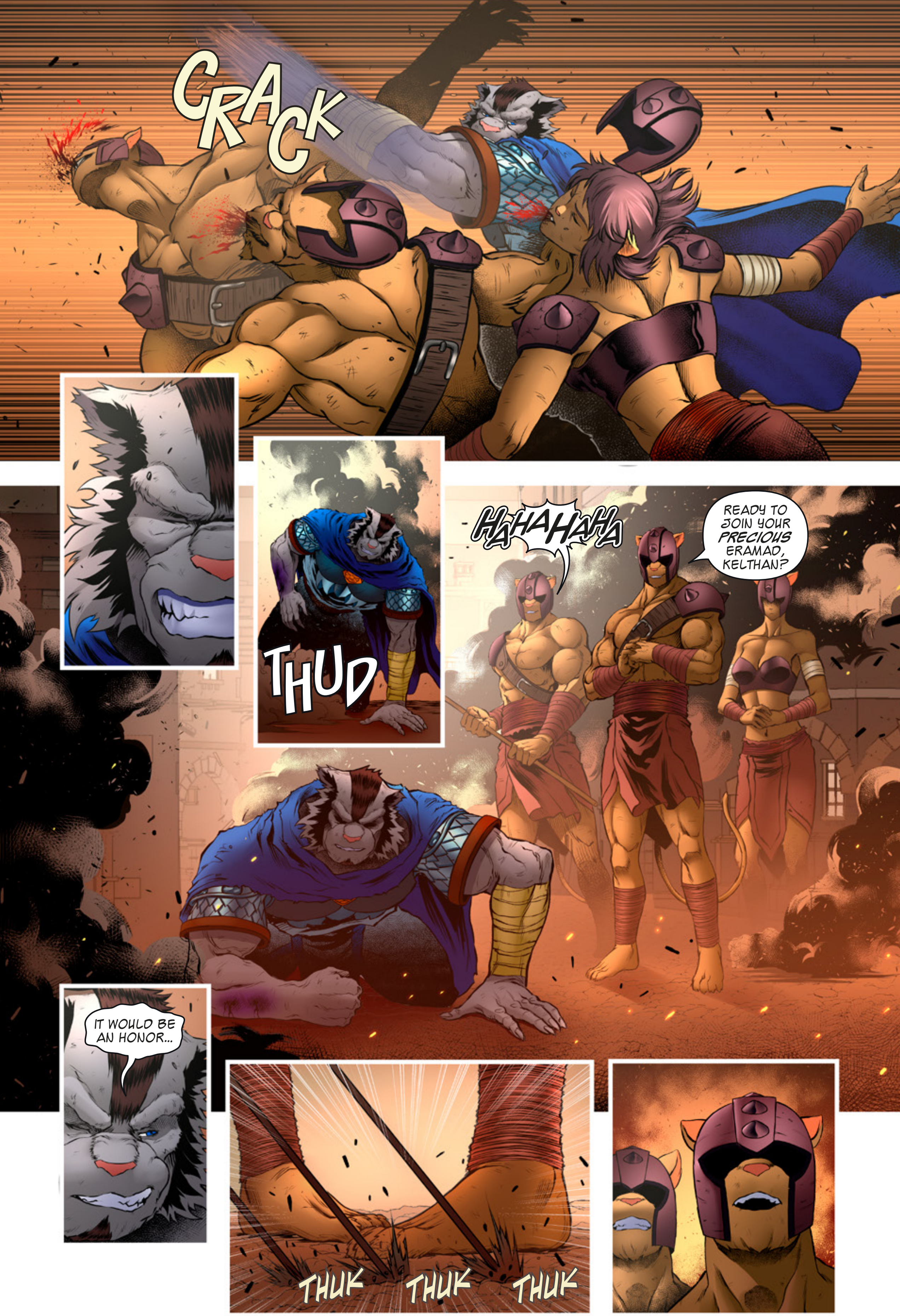
BATTLECATS®

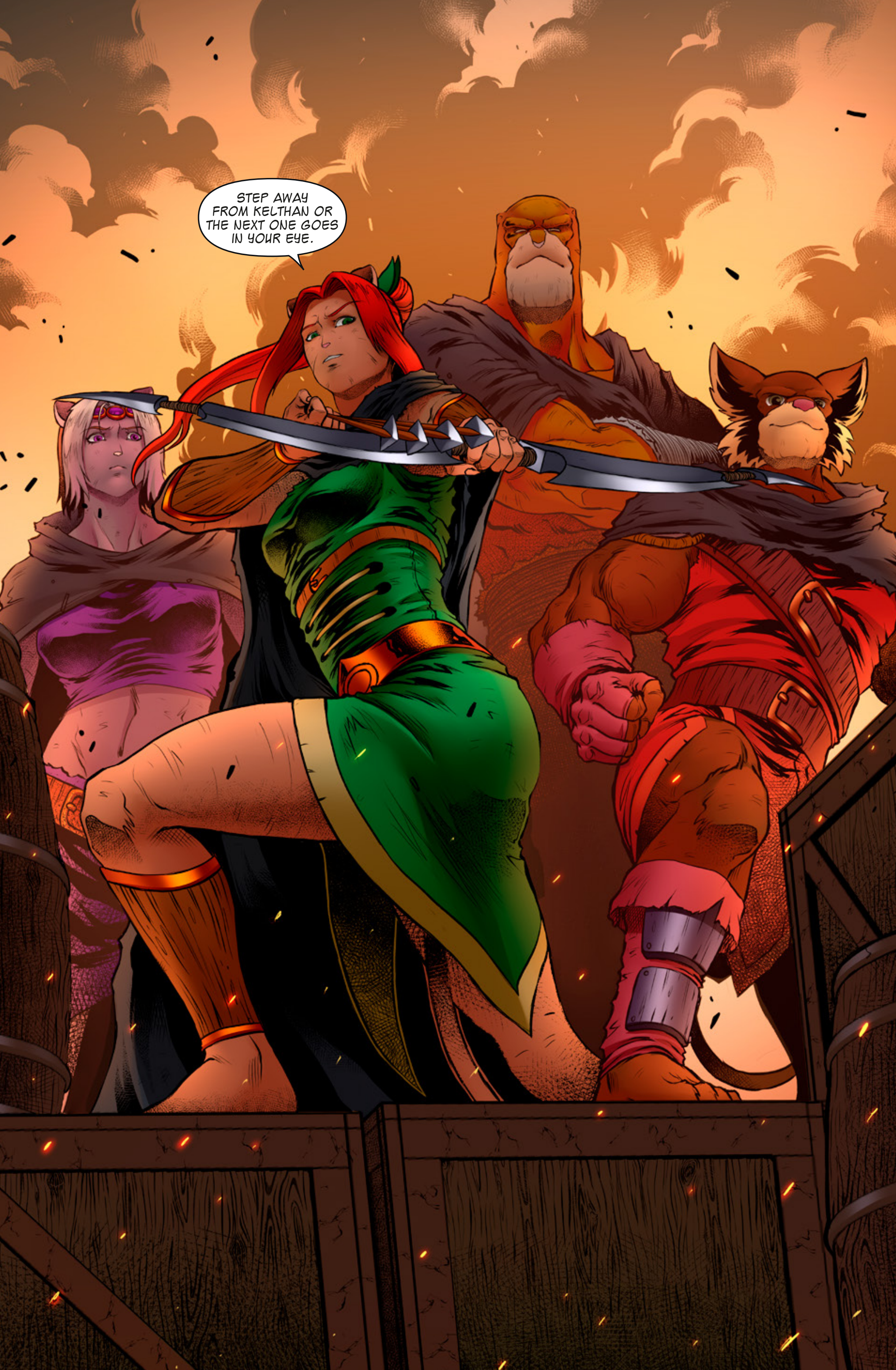

FANGHELM, THE PRIDELANDS.
TWO WEEKS AFTER ERAMAD'S DEMISE.
THE HEART OF VALDERIA MOURNS THE LOSS OF THE ERAMAD DYNASTY...
FANGHELM, THE CAPITAL OF VALDERIA, HAS BEEN OVERRUN BY UMBRA RAIDERS.
RORINCLAW, A PERPETUAL STATE OF VIOLENCE, HAS FALLEN UPON THE KINGDOM...
AND THOSE FAITHFUL TO THE LION GOD HAVE NOWHERE LEFT TO TURN.

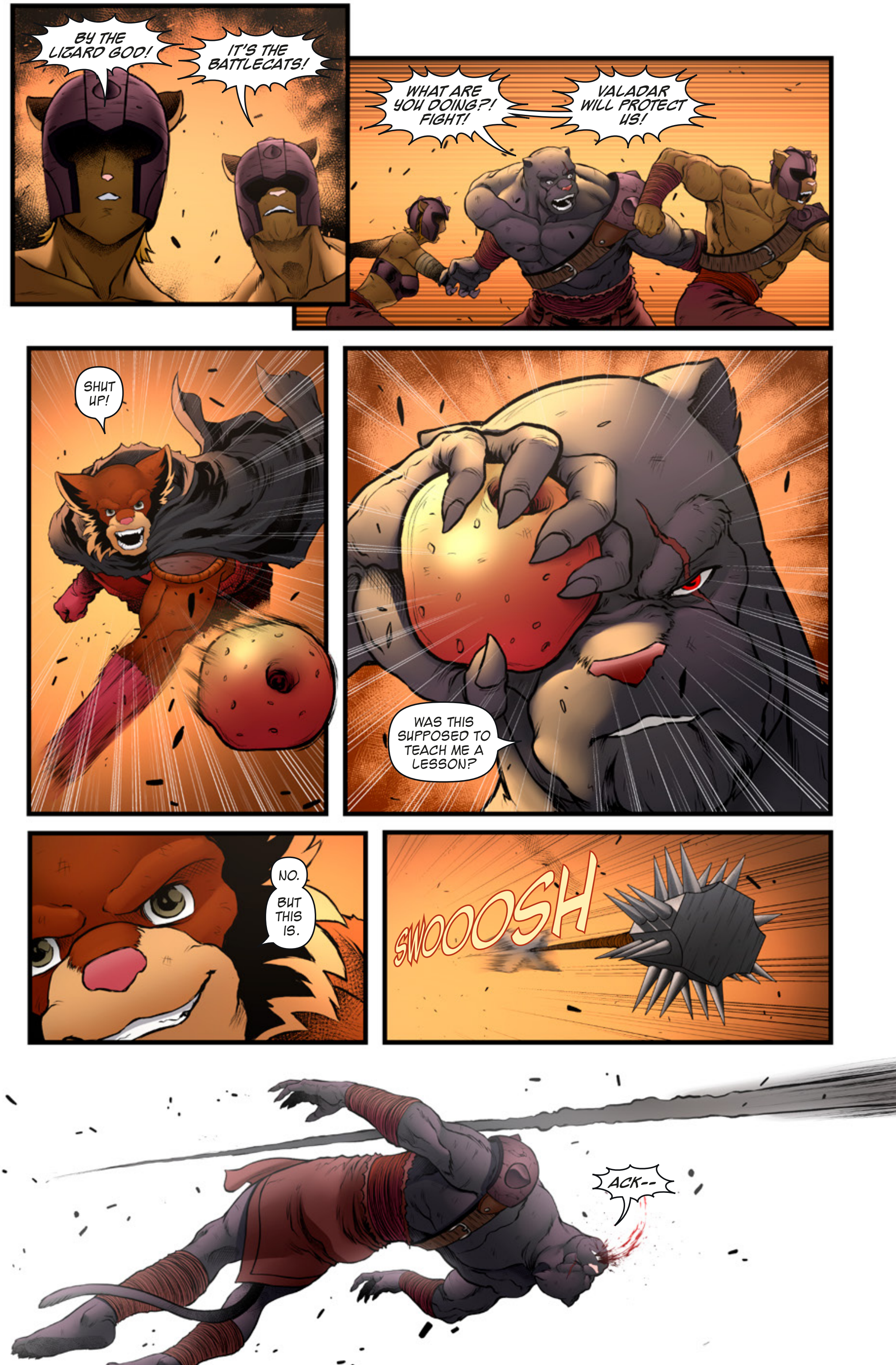

VALADAR'S RULE IS ABSOLUTE.
SURRENDER YOURSELVES TO HIM, PRIDELANDERS.
YOU OWE HIM YOUR LIVES!
CURSE YOU, UMBRA SCUM!
THE ERAMAD'S ARE THE TRUE LEADERS OF THIS KINGDOM!
THEY BROUGHT US BALANCE WHEN THERE WAS NOTHING BUT CHAOS!
SHUT YOUR MOUTH!
VALADAR IS YOUR KING! HE HAS FREED US ALL FROM OUR CAGES!
WHIP
≥SOB≤
DADDY!
AND NOW...
...YOU WILL SUFFER LIKE ALL THOSE OTHER WEAK FELINES WHO DEFY THE NEW DYNASTY.

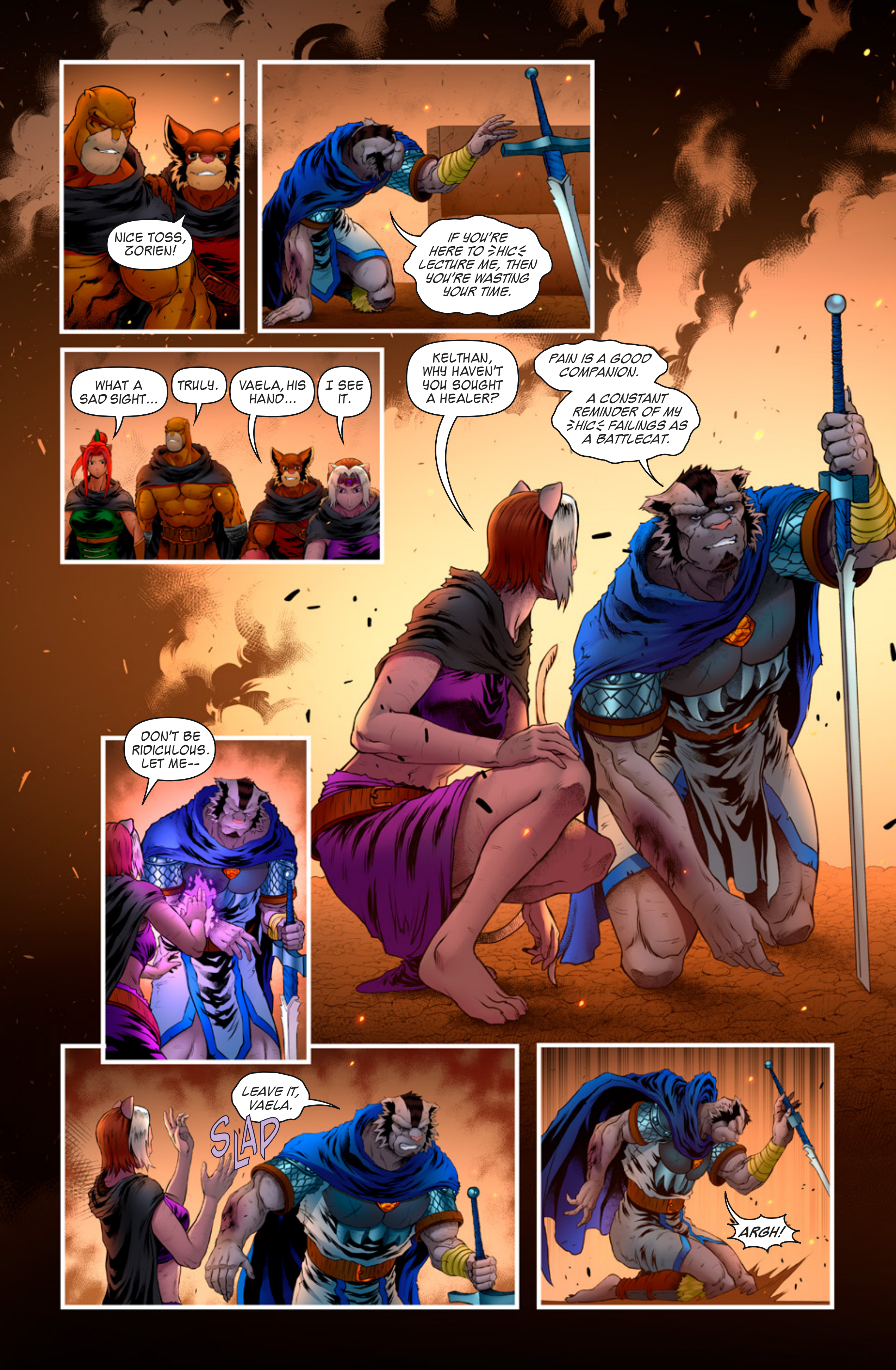

WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
KLUNK
WHO DARES?!

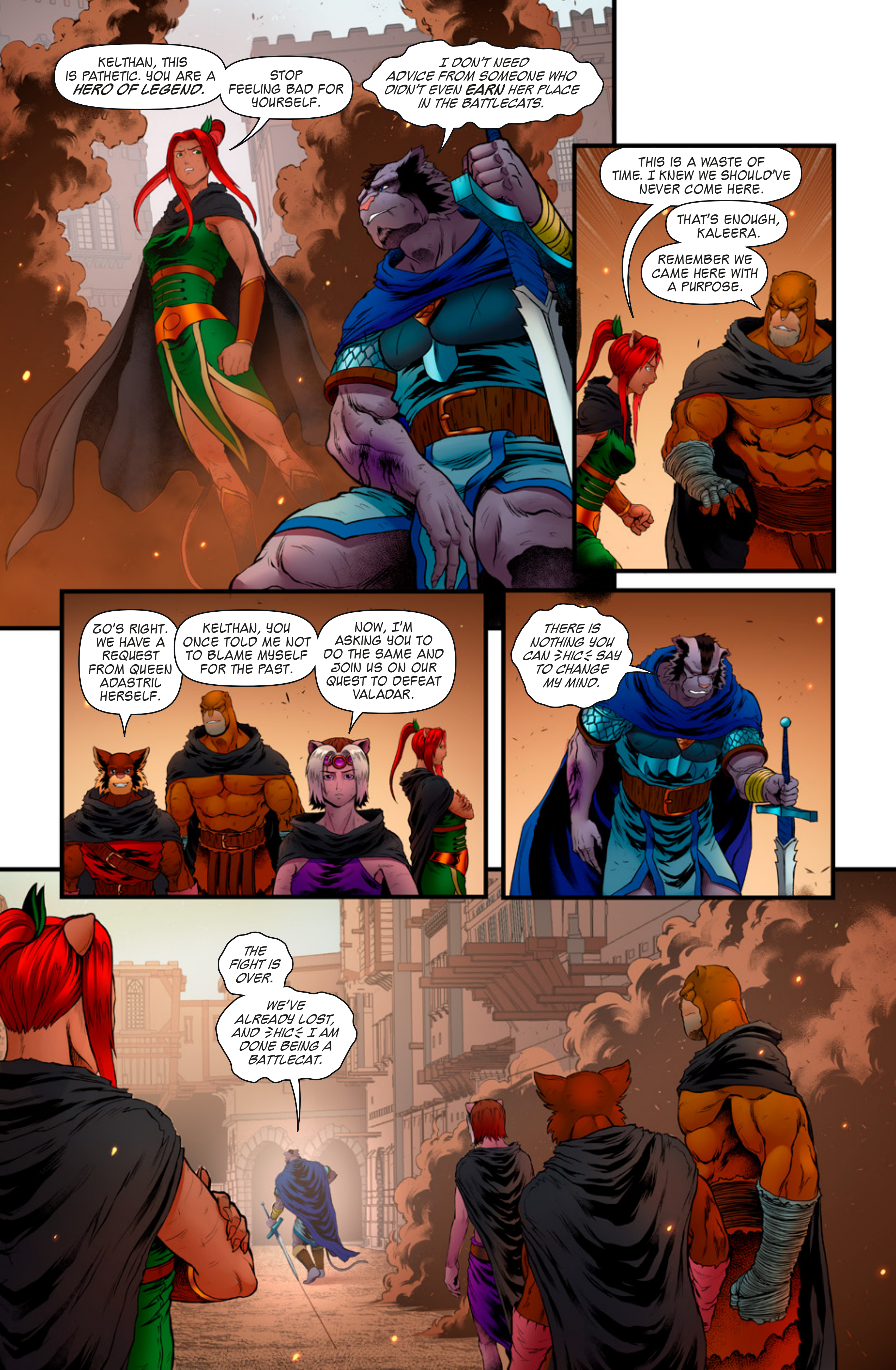

>HIC<
CRAP. I THINK THAT ONE STILL HAD SOME MEAD IN IT.
>HIC<
MEKKAR WOULD BE >HIC< DISAPPOINTED.
IS THAT... KELTHAN OF STORMHOLT?
SINCE NO ONE HAS HEARD FROM YOU SINCE THE DEATH OF ERAMAD III, I FIGURED YOU HAD TAKEN THE *EASY* WAY OUT.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE DECIDED TO LIVE OUT THE REST OF YOUR DAYS WALLOWING IN SELF PITY.
IT SEEMS AS THOUGH YOUR TIME HAS RUN OUT.
UMBRAS... BREAK HIM.
YAAAAAAAH!
GULP GULP GULP

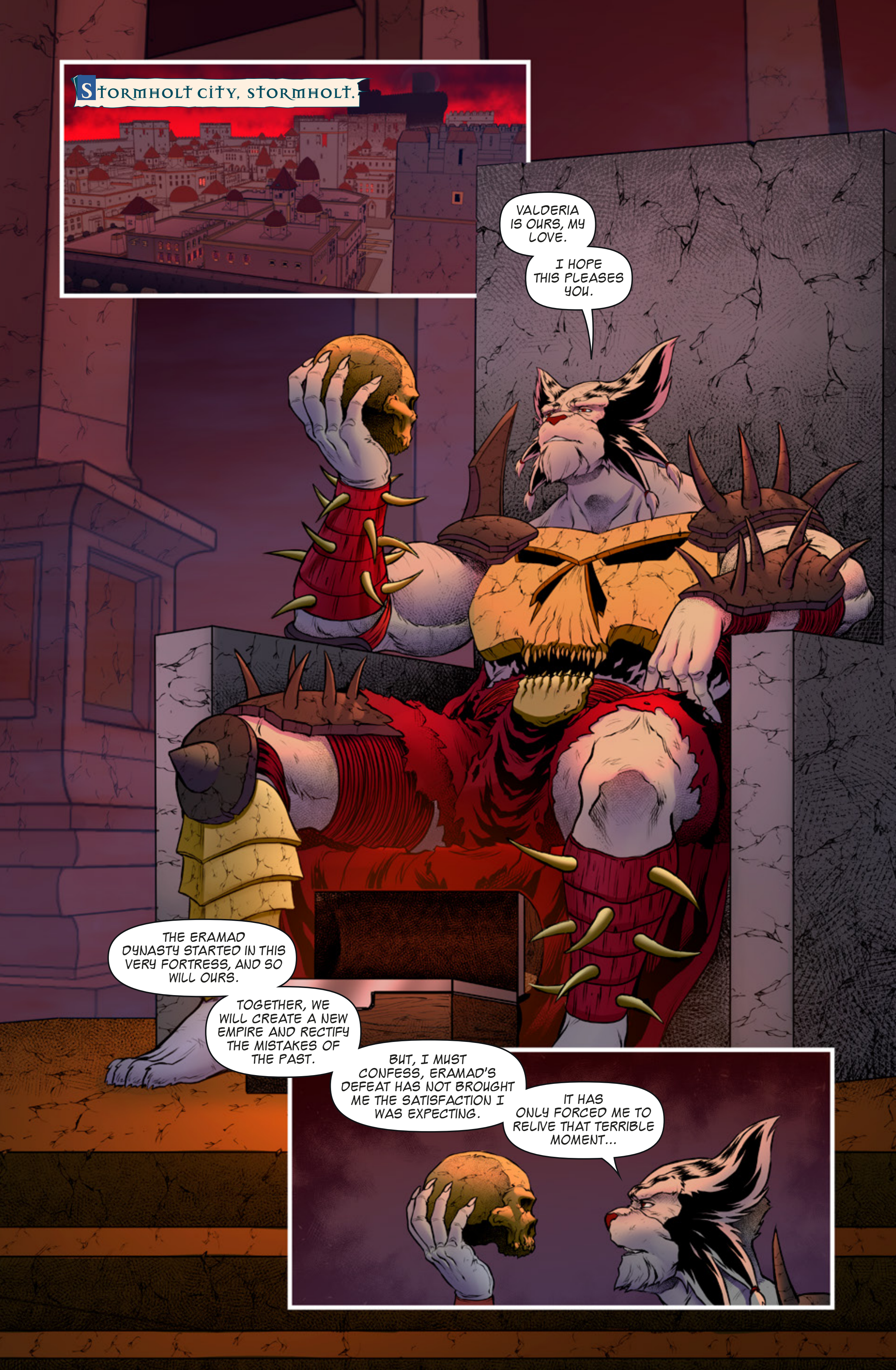

CRACK
THUD
HAHAHAHA
READY TO JOIN YOUR *PRECIOUS* ERAMAD, KELTHAN?
IT WOULD BE AN HONOR...
THUK
THUK
THUK

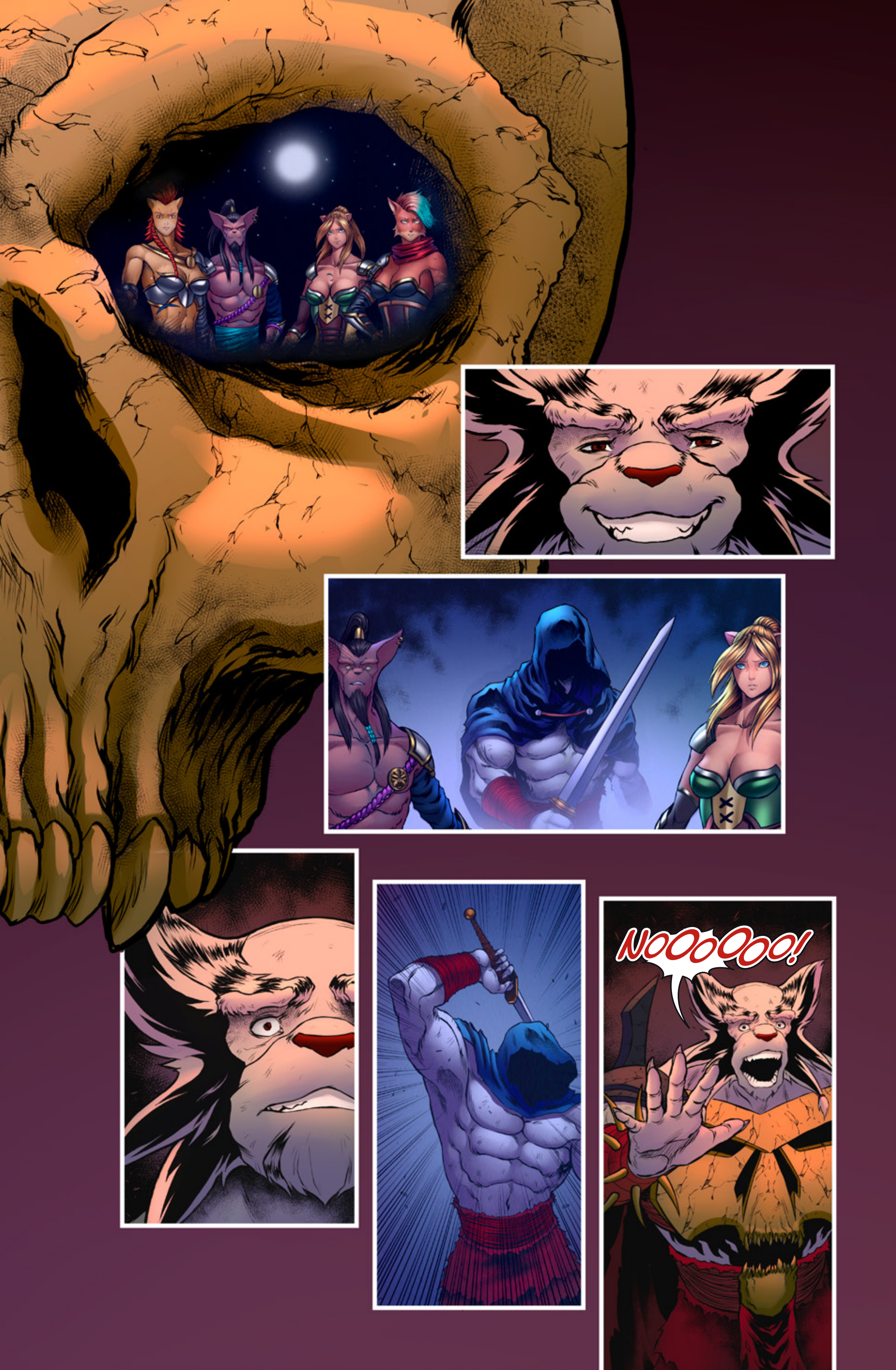

STEP AWAY FROM KELTHAN OR THE NEXT ONE GOES IN YOUR EYE.

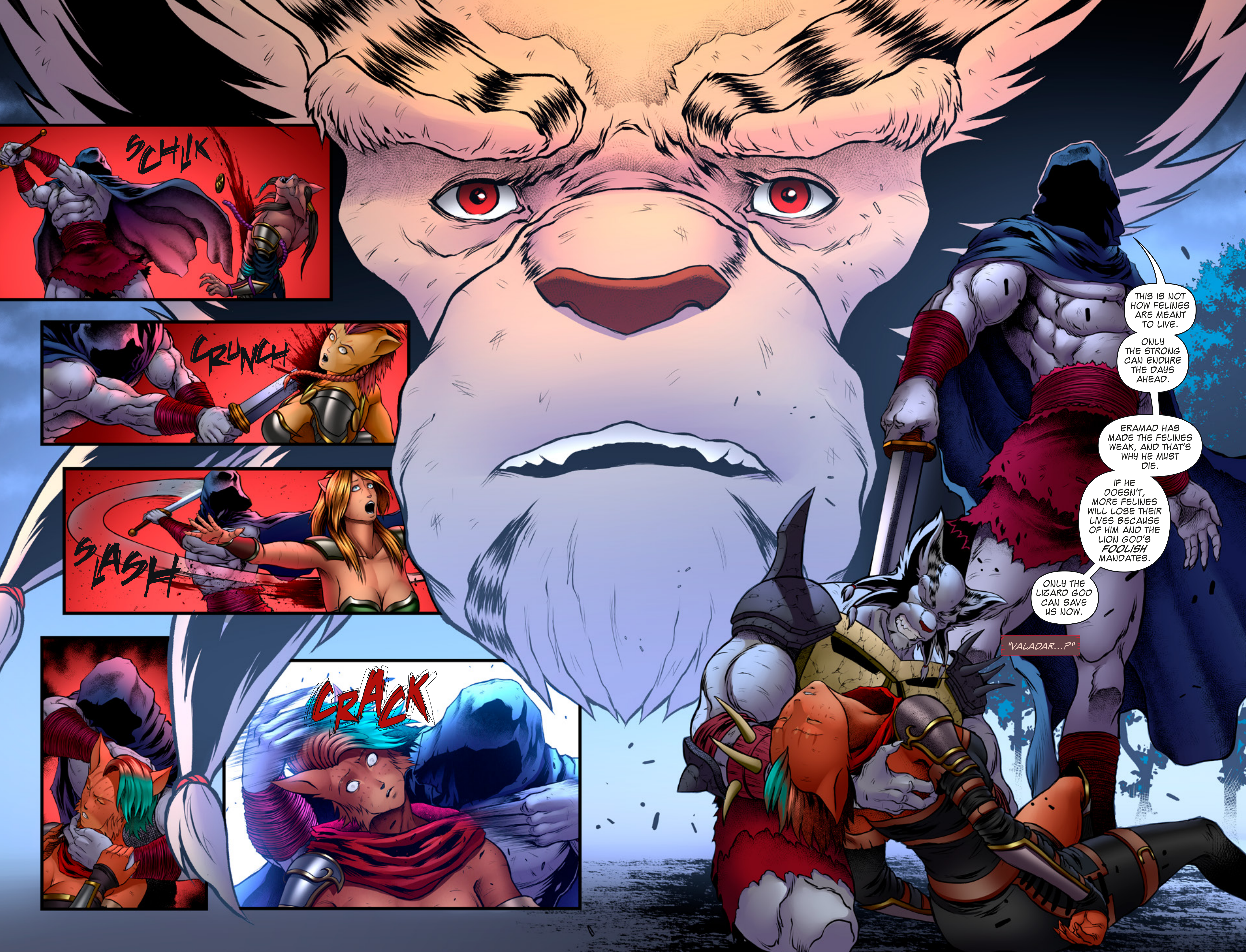

BY THE LIZARD GOD!
IT'S THE BATTLECATS!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! FIGHT!
VALADAR WILL PROTECT US!
SHUT UP!
WAS THIS SUPPOSED TO TEACH ME A LESSON?
NO.
BUT THIS IS.
SWOOOOSH
ACK--

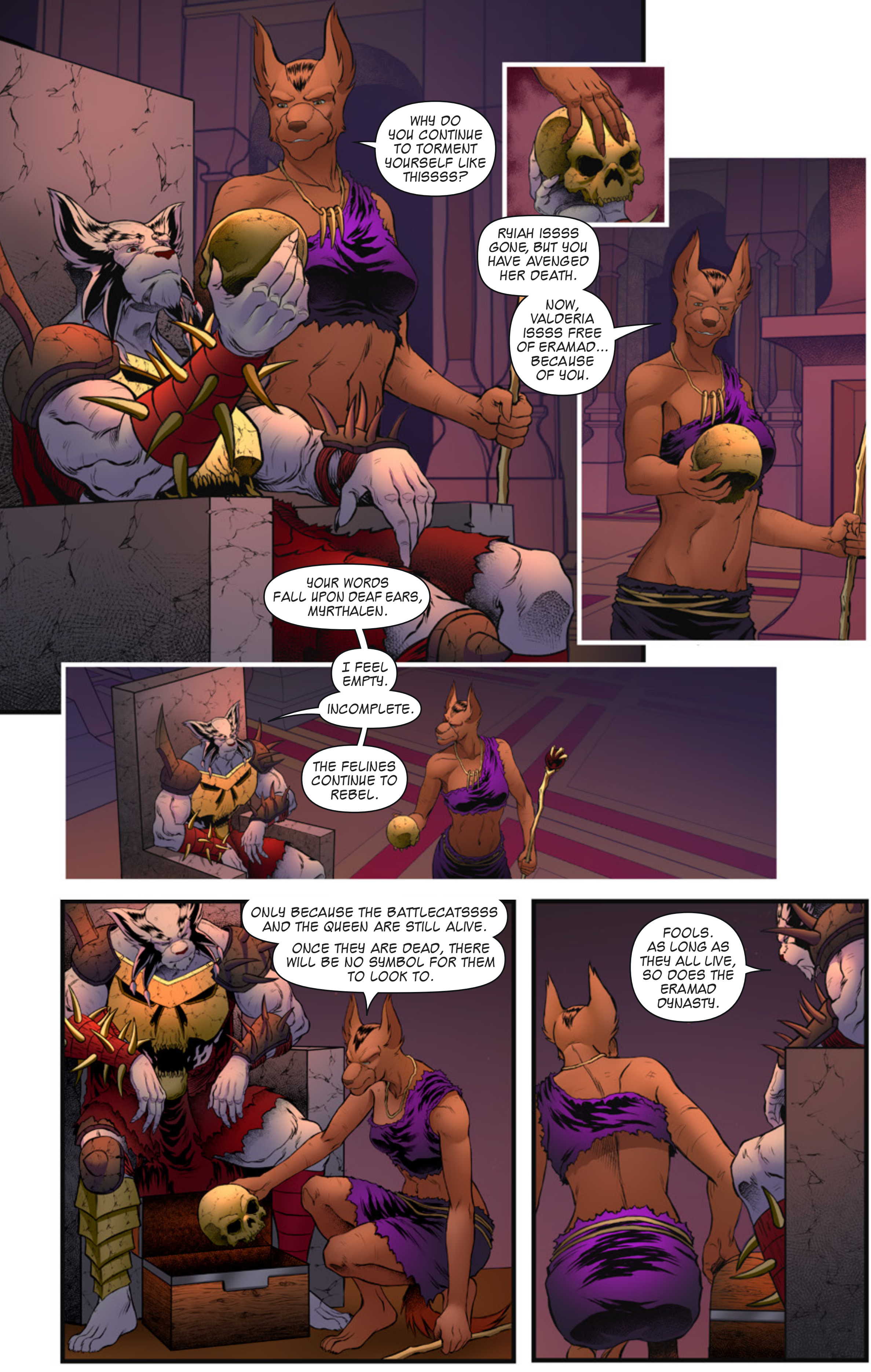

NICE TOSS, ZORIEN!
IF YOU'RE HERE TO >HIC< LECTURE ME, THEN YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME.
WHAT A SAD SIGHT...
TRULY.
VAELA, HIS HAND...
I SEE IT.
KELTHAN, WHY HAVEN'T YOU SOUGHT A HEALER?
PAIN IS A GOOD COMPANION.
A CONSTANT REMINDER OF MY >HIC< FAILINGS AS A BATTLECAT.
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS. LET ME--
LEAVE IT, VAELA.
SLAP
ARGH!

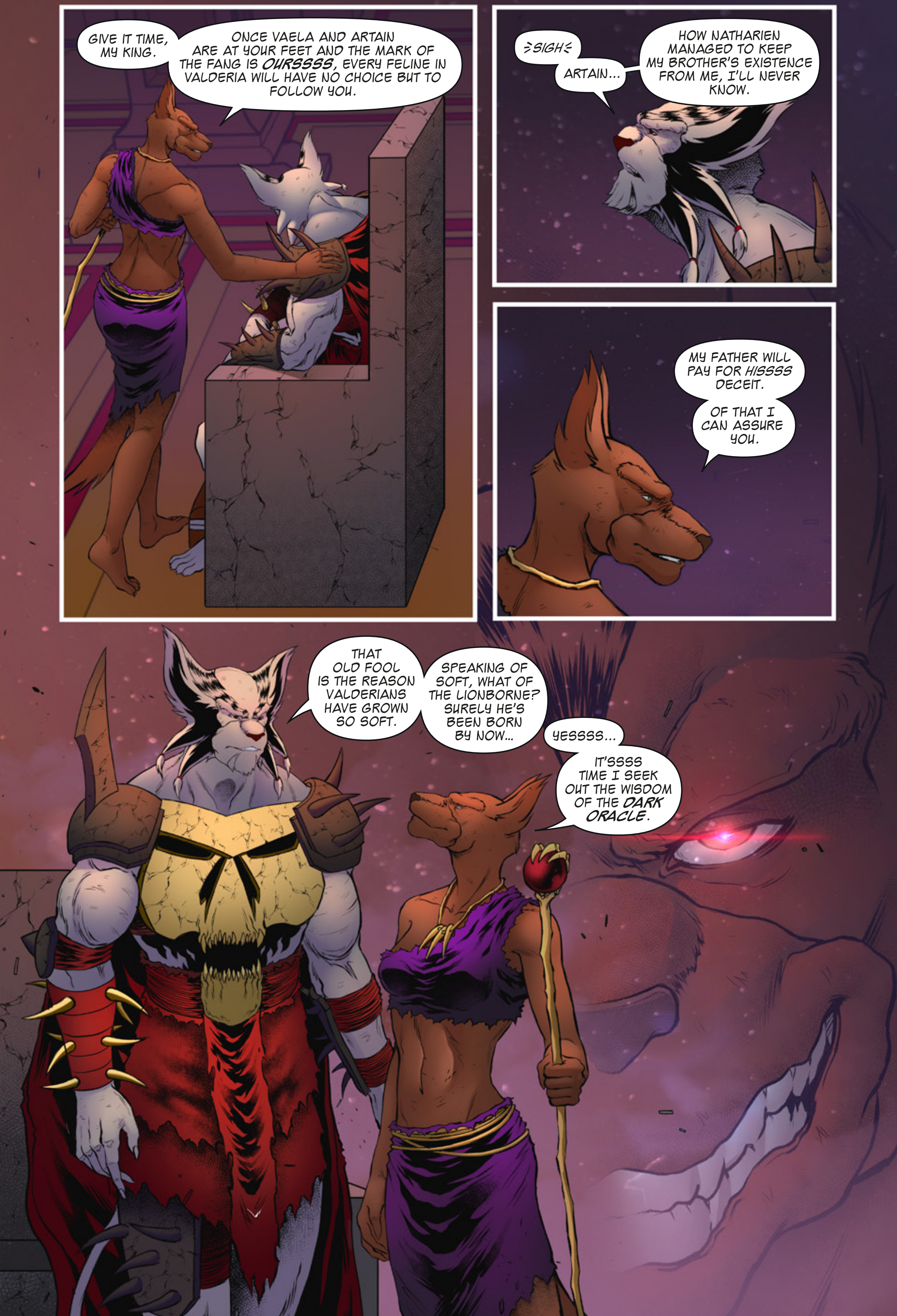

KELTHAN, THIS IS PATHETIC. YOU ARE A **HERO OF LEGEND.**
STOP FEELING BAD FOR YOURSELF.
*I DON'T NEED ADVICE FROM SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T EVEN **EARN** HER PLACE IN THE BATTLECATS.*
THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME. I KNEW WE SHOULD'VE NEVER COME HERE.
THAT'S ENOUGH, KALEERA.
REMEMBER WE CAME HERE WITH A PURPOSE.
ZO'S RIGHT. WE HAVE A REQUEST FROM QUEEN ADASTRIL HERSELF.
KELTHAN, YOU ONCE TOLD ME NOT TO BLAME MYSELF FOR THE PAST.
NOW, I'M ASKING YOU TO DO THE SAME AND JOIN US ON OUR QUEST TO DEFEAT VALADAR.
THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN >HIC< SAY TO CHANGE MY MIND.
THE FIGHT IS OVER.
WE'VE ALREADY LOST, AND >HIC< I AM DONE BEING A BATTLECAT.

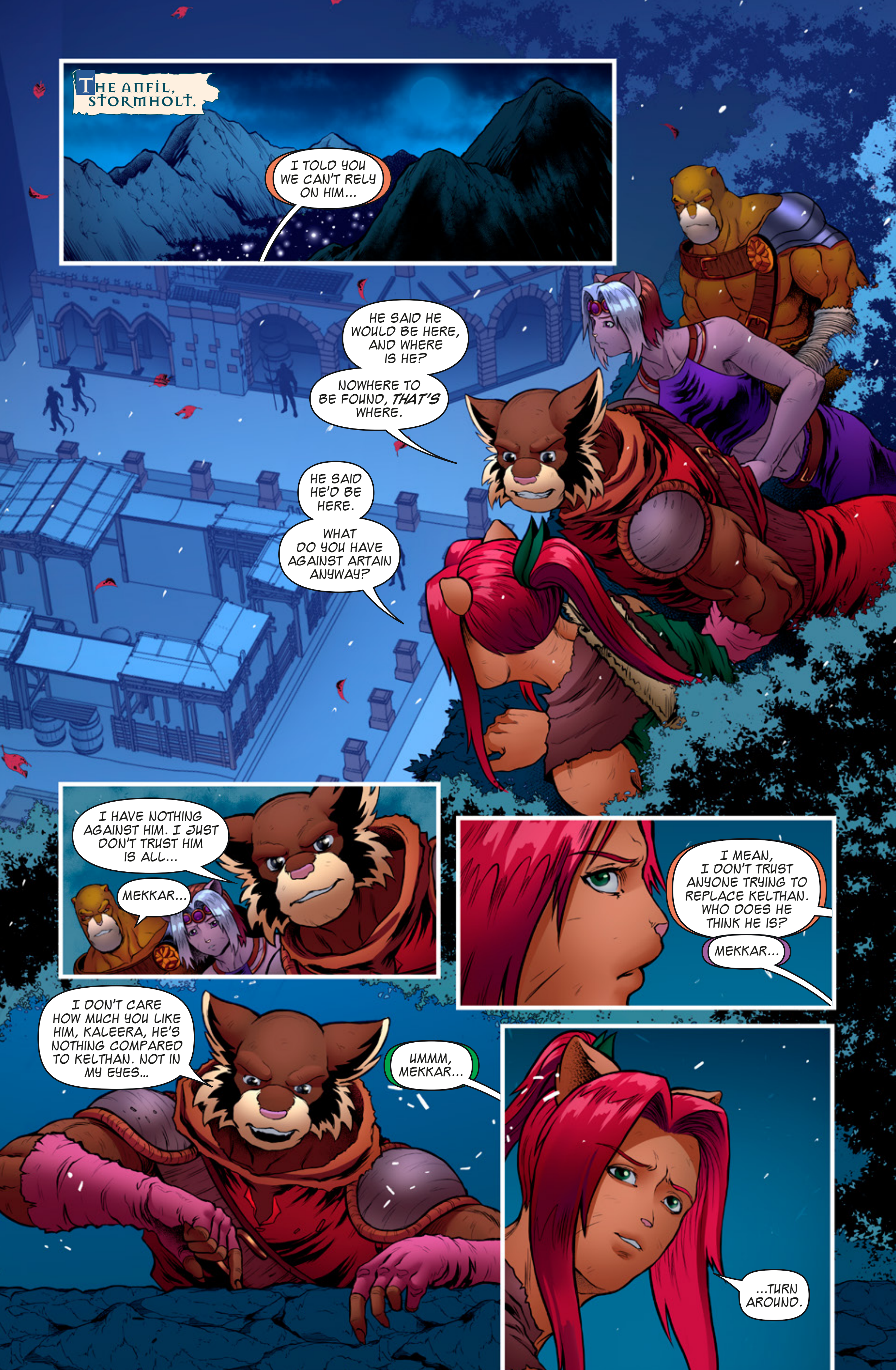

Stormholt City, Stormholt.
VALDERIA IS OURS, MY LOVE.
I HOPE THIS PLEASES YOU.
THE ERAMAD DYNASTY STARTED IN THIS VERY FORTRESS, AND SO WILL OURS.
TOGETHER, WE WILL CREATE A NEW EMPIRE AND RECTIFY THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST.
BUT, I MUST CONFESS, ERAMAD'S DEFEAT HAS NOT BROUGHT ME THE SATISFACTION I WAS EXPECTING.
IT HAS ONLY FORCED ME TO RELIVE THAT TERRIBLE MOMENT...

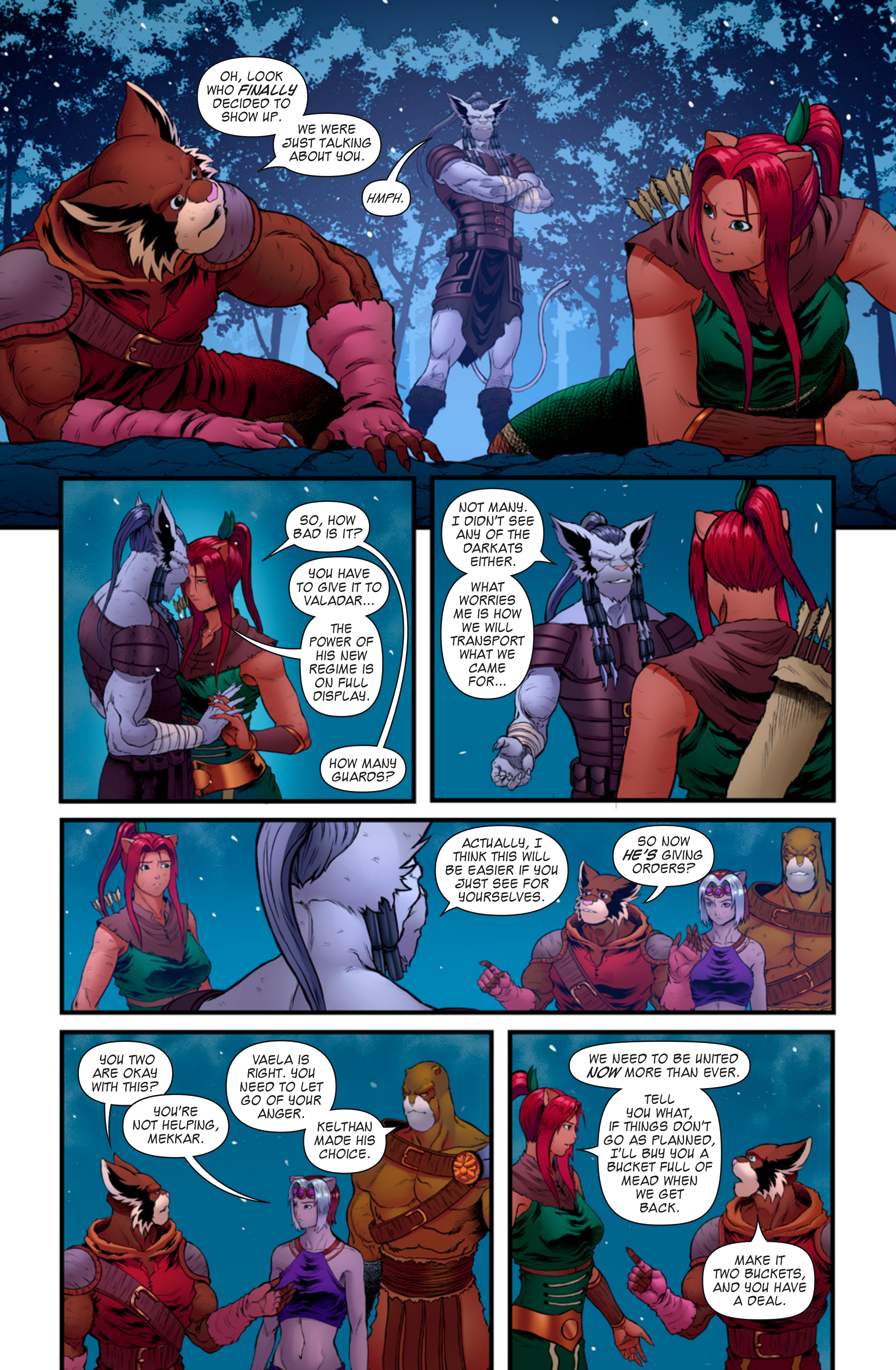

NOOoOoo!

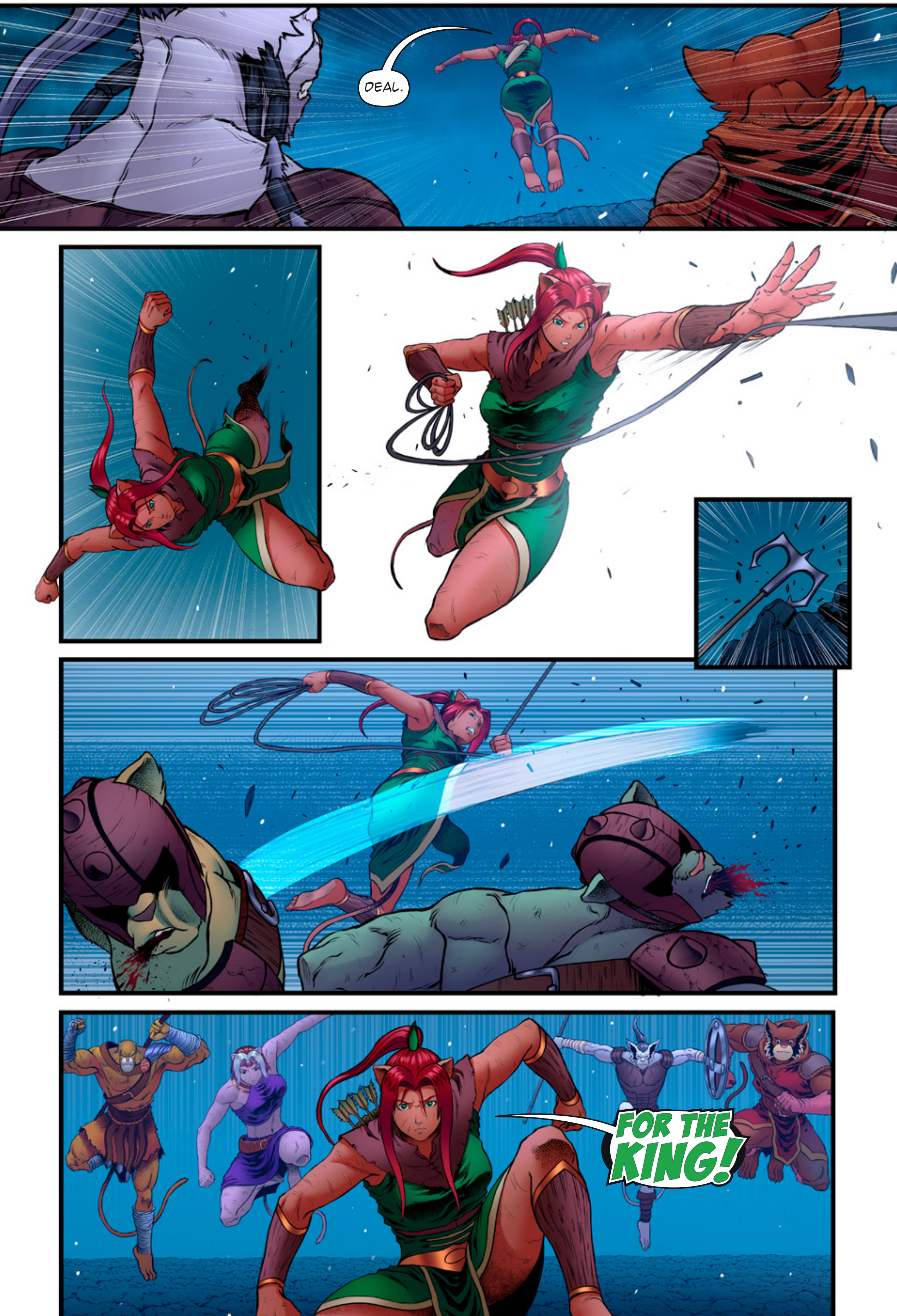

SCHLIK
CRUNCH
SLASH
CRACK
THIS IS NOT HOW FELINES ARE MEANT TO LIVE.
ONLY THE STRONG CAN ENDURE THE DAYS AHEAD.
ERAMAD HAS MADE THE FELINES WEAK, AND THAT'S WHY HE MUST DIE.
IF HE DOESN'T, MORE FELINES WILL LOSE THEIR LIVES BECAUSE OF HIM AND THE LION GOD'S *FOOLISH* MANDATES.
ONLY THE LIZARD GOD CAN SAVE US NOW.
"VALADAR...?"

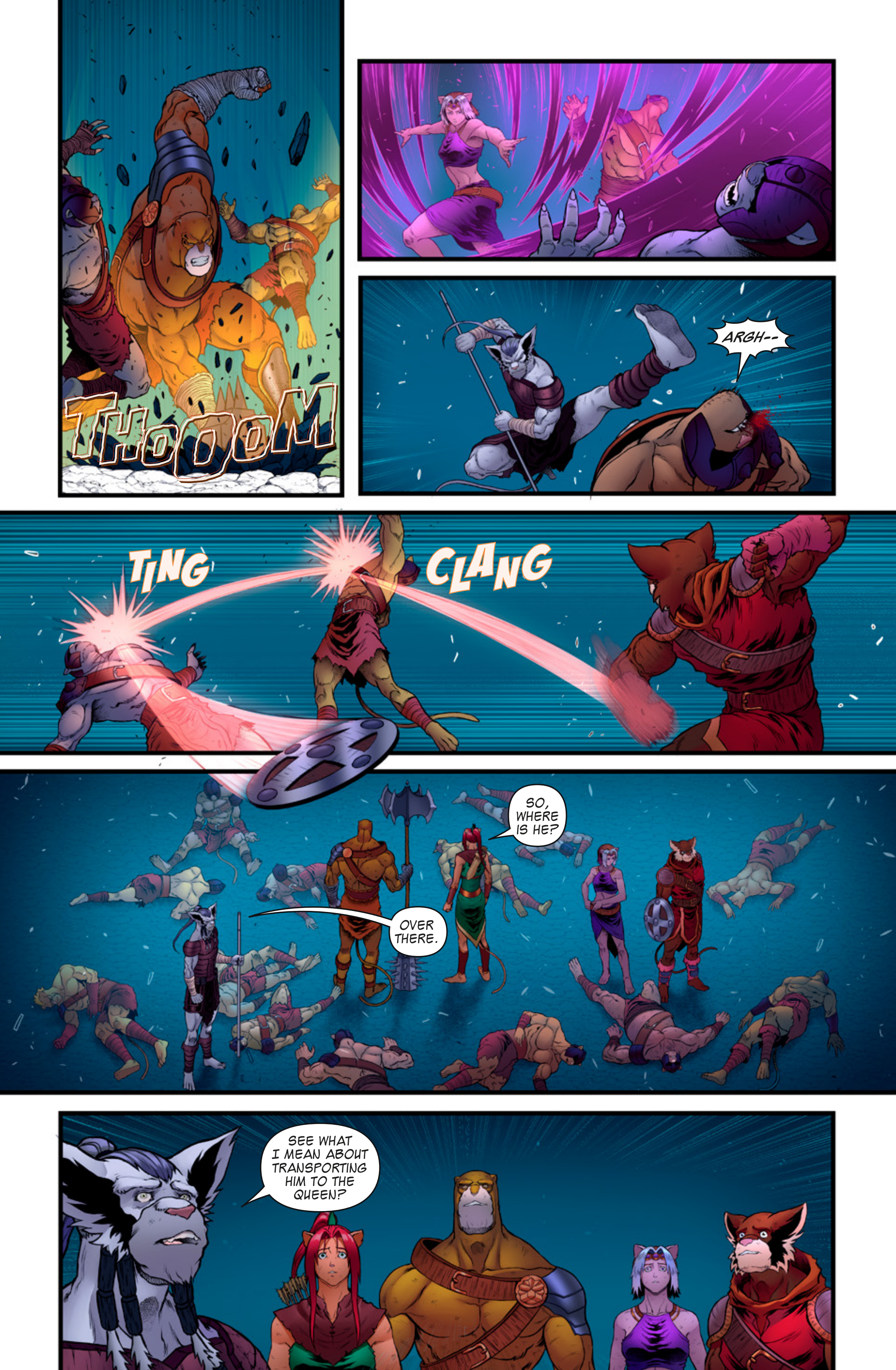

WHY DO YOU CONTINUE TO TORMENT YOURSELF LIKE THISSSS?
RYIAH ISSSS GONE, BUT YOU HAVE AVENGED HER DEATH.
NOW, VALDERIA ISSSS FREE OF ERAMAD... BECAUSE OF YOU.
YOUR WORDS FALL UPON DEAF EARS, MYRTHALEN.
I FEEL EMPTY.
INCOMPLETE.
THE FELINES CONTINUE TO REBEL.
ONLY BECAUSE THE BATTLECATSSSS AND THE QUEEN ARE STILL ALIVE.
ONCE THEY ARE DEAD, THERE WILL BE NO SYMBOL FOR THEM TO LOOK TO.
FOOLS. AS LONG AS THEY ALL LIVE, SO DOES THE ERAMAD DYNASTY.

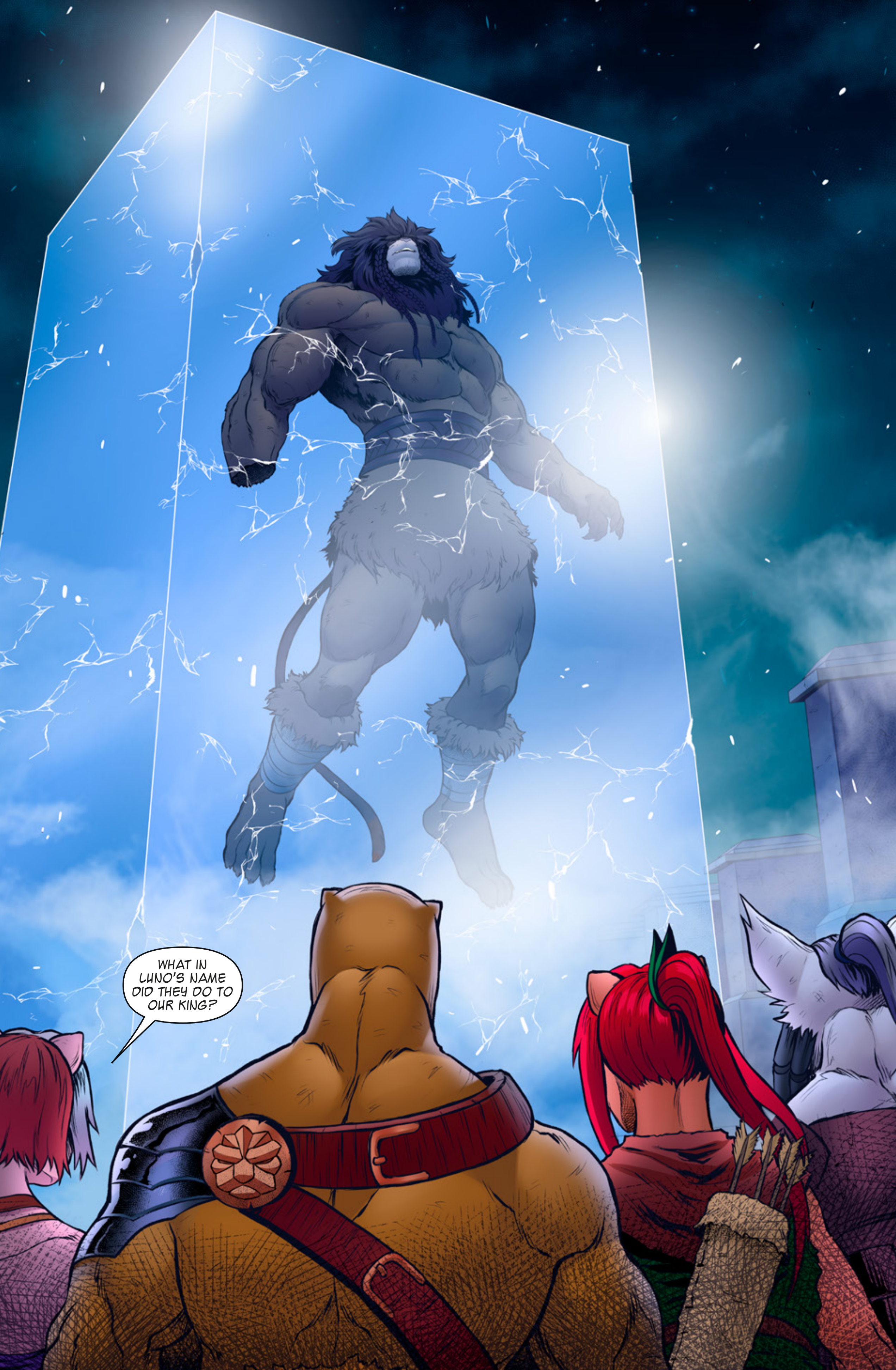

GIVE IT TIME, MY KING.
ONCE VAELA AND ARTAIN ARE AT YOUR FEET AND THE MARK OF THE FANG IS *OURSSSS*, EVERY FELINE IN VALDERIA WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FOLLOW YOU.
>SIGH<
ARTAIN...
HOW NATHARIEN MANAGED TO KEEP MY BROTHER'S EXISTENCE FROM ME, I'LL NEVER KNOW.
MY FATHER WILL PAY FOR *HISSSS* DECEIT.
OF THAT I CAN ASSURE YOU.
THAT OLD FOOL IS THE REASON VALDERIANS HAVE GROWN SO SOFT.
SPEAKING OF SOFT, WHAT OF THE LIONBORNE? SURELY HE'S BEEN BORN BY NOW...
YESSSS...
IT'SSSS TIME I SEEK OUT THE WISDOM OF THE ***DARK ORACLE***.

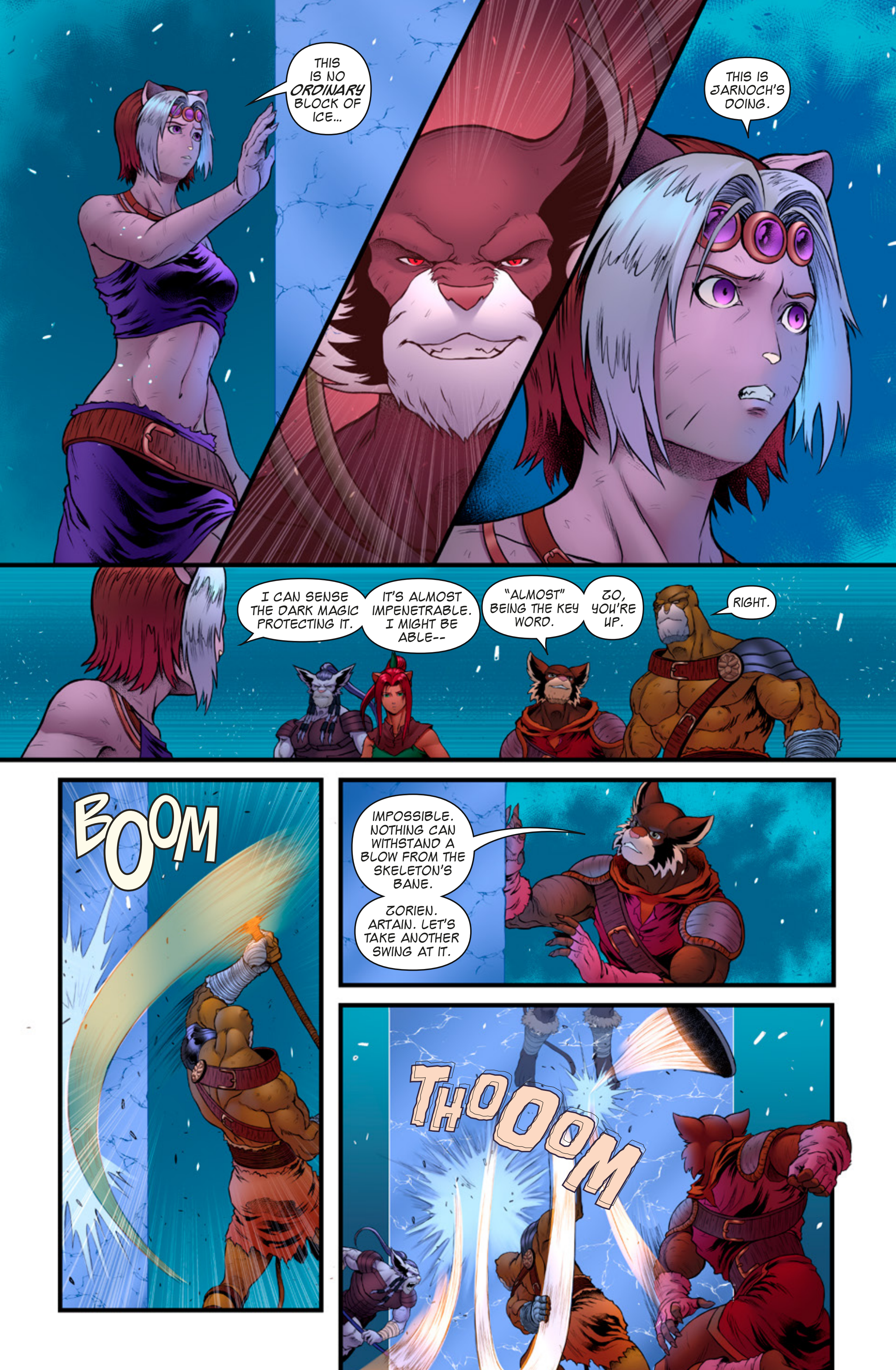

THE ANFIL, STORMHOLT.
I TOLD YOU WE CAN'T RELY ON HIM...
HE SAID HE WOULD BE HERE, AND WHERE IS HE?
NOWHERE TO BE FOUND, *THAT'S* WHERE.
HE SAID HE'D BE HERE.
WHAT DO YOU HAVE AGAINST ARTAIN ANYWAY?
I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST HIM. I JUST DON'T TRUST HIM IS ALL...
MEKKAR...
I MEAN, I DON'T TRUST ANYONE TRYING TO REPLACE KELTHAN. WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?
MEKKAR...
I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU LIKE HIM, KALEERA, HE'S NOTHING COMPARED TO KELTHAN. NOT IN MY EYES...
UMMM, MEKKAR...
...TURN AROUND.

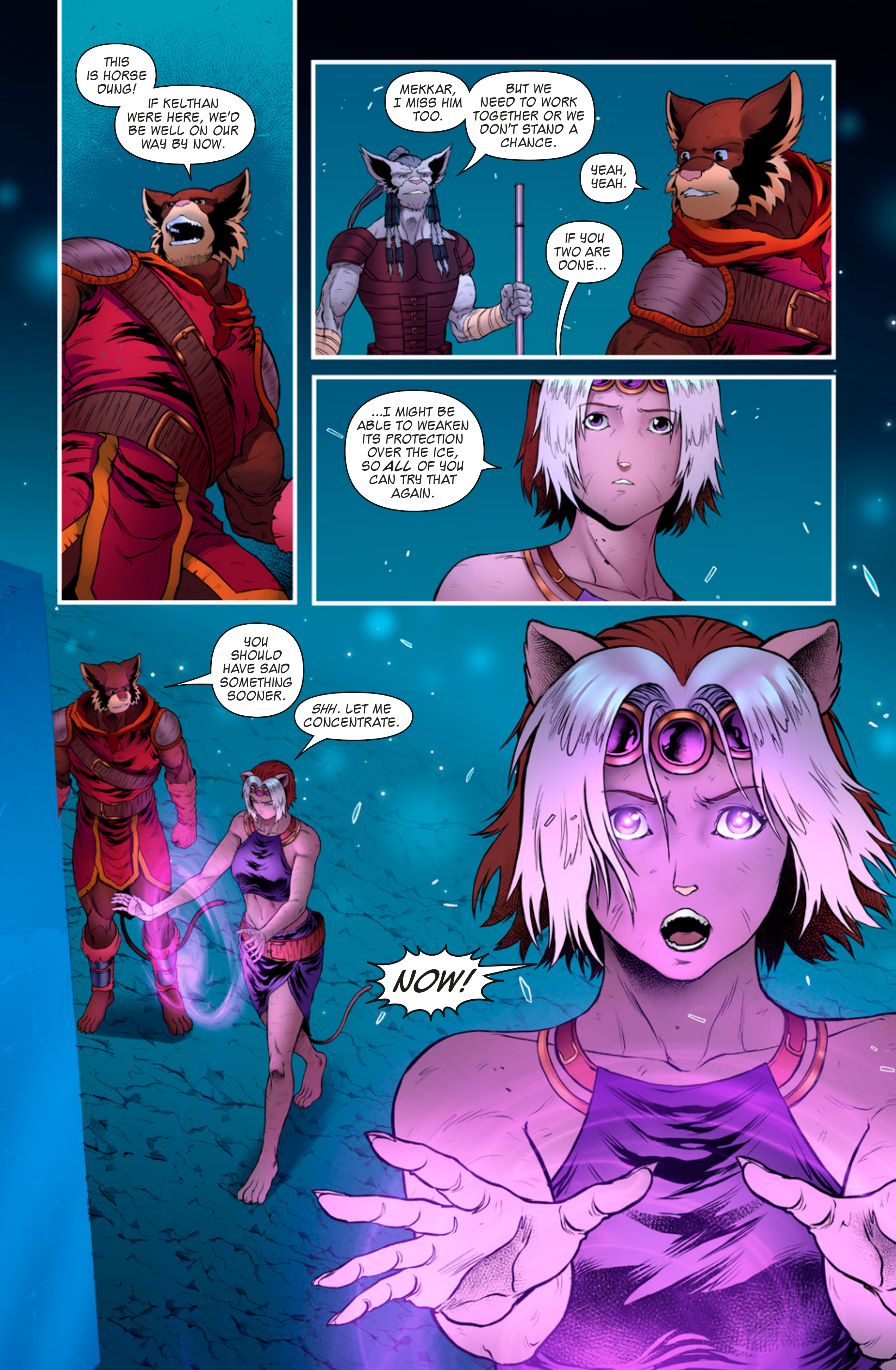

OH, LOOK WHO *FINALLY* DECIDED TO SHOW UP.
WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT YOU.
HMPH.
SO, HOW BAD IS IT?
YOU HAVE TO GIVE IT TO VALADAR...
THE POWER OF HIS NEW REGIME IS ON FULL DISPLAY.
HOW MANY GUARDS?
NOT MANY. I DIDN'T SEE ANY OF THE DARKATS EITHER.
WHAT WORRIES ME IS HOW WE WILL TRANSPORT WHAT WE CAME FOR...
ACTUALLY, I THINK THIS WILL BE EASIER IF YOU JUST SEE FOR YOURSELVES.
SO NOW *HE'S* GIVING ORDERS?
YOU TWO ARE OKAY WITH THIS?
YOU'RE NOT HELPING, MEKKAR.
VAELA IS RIGHT. YOU NEED TO LET GO OF YOUR ANGER.
KELTHAN MADE HIS CHOICE.
WE NEED TO BE UNITED *NOW* MORE THAN EVER.
TELL YOU WHAT, IF THINGS DON'T GO AS PLANNED, I'LL BUY YOU A BUCKET FULL OF MEAD WHEN WE GET BACK.
MAKE IT TWO BUCKETS, AND YOU HAVE A DEAL.

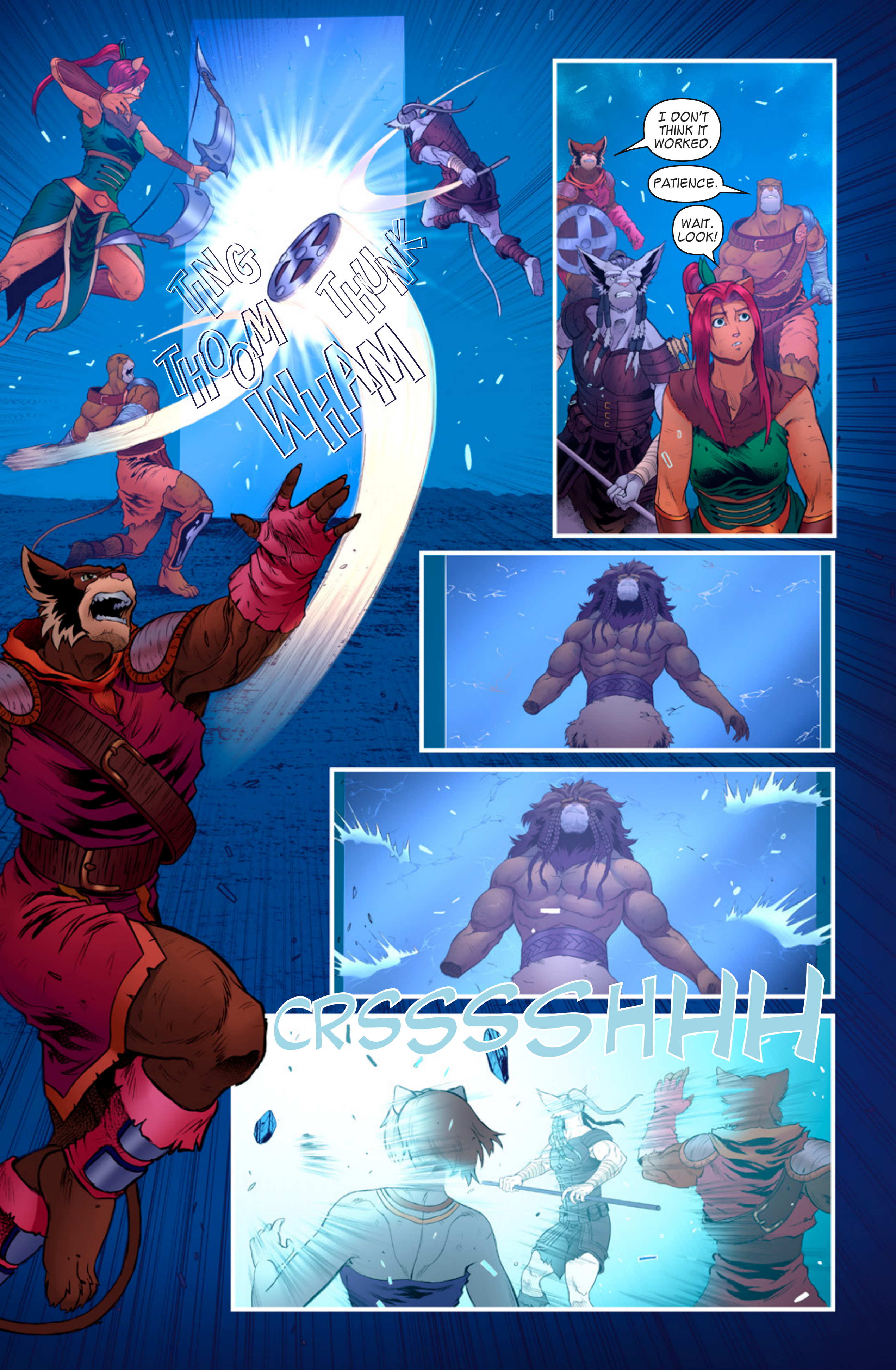

DEAL.
FOR THE KING!

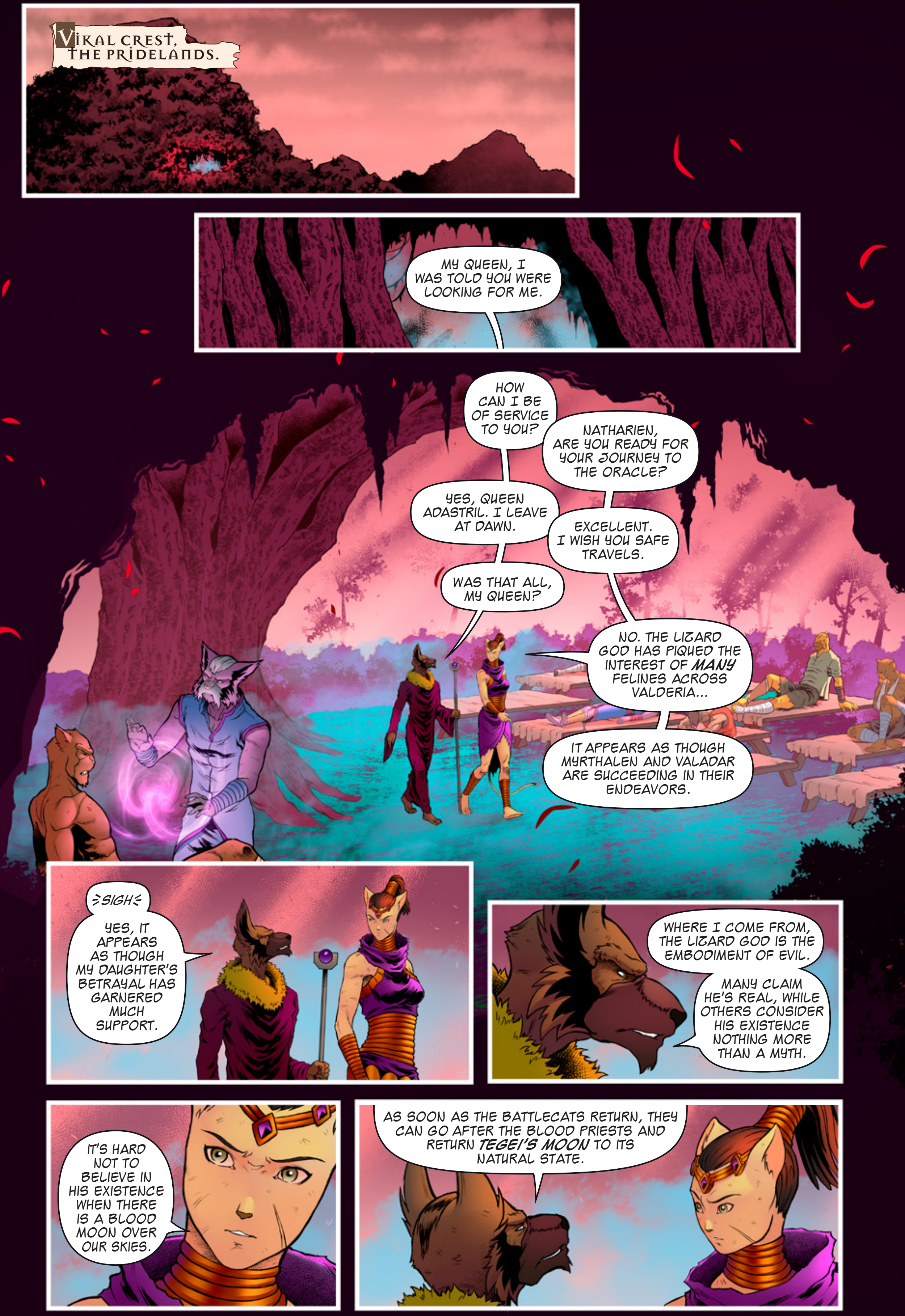

THOOOM
ARGH--
TING
CLANG
SO, WHERE IS HE?
OVER THERE.
SEE WHAT I MEAN ABOUT TRANSPORTING HIM TO THE QUEEN?

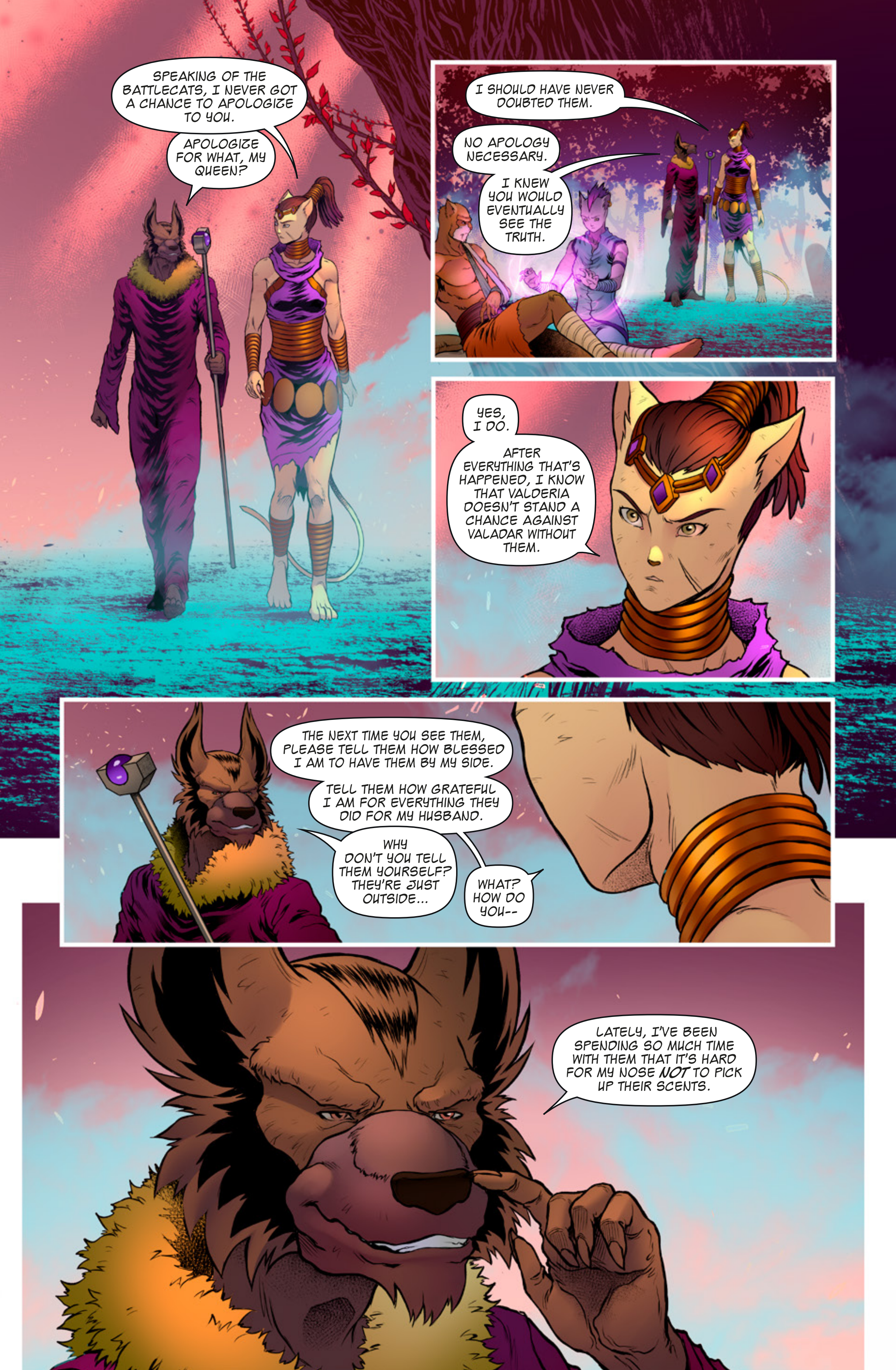

WHAT IN LUNO'S NAME DID THEY DO TO OUR KING?

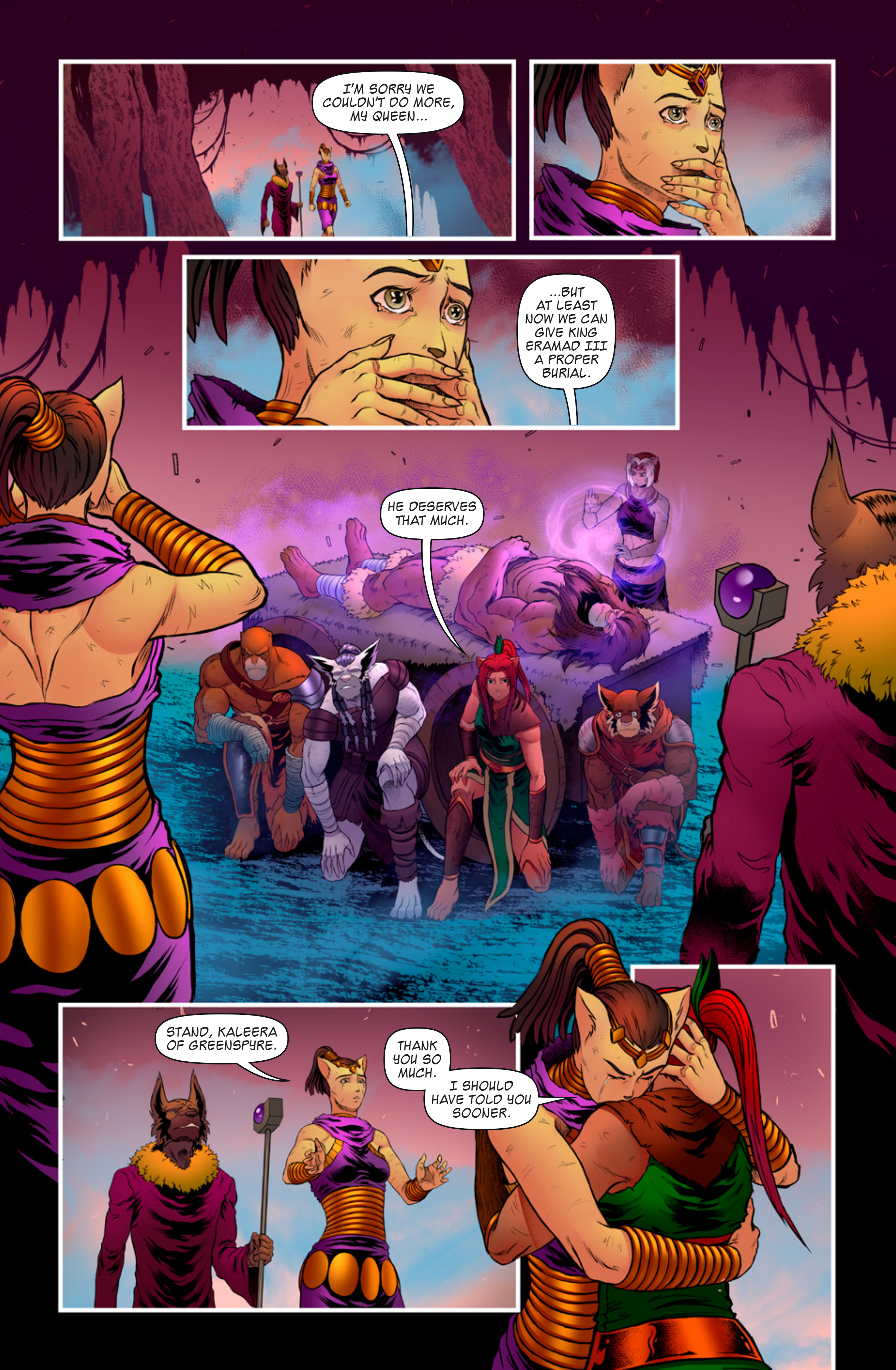

THIS IS NO *ORDINARY* BLOCK OF ICE...
THIS IS JARNOCH'S DOING.
I CAN SENSE THE DARK MAGIC PROTECTING IT.
IT'S ALMOST IMPENETRABLE. I MIGHT BE ABLE--
"ALMOST" BEING THE KEY WORD.
ZO, YOU'RE UP.
RIGHT.
BOOM
IMPOSSIBLE. NOTHING CAN WITHSTAND A BLOW FROM THE SKELETON'S BANE.
ZORIEN. ARTAIN. LET'S TAKE ANOTHER SWING AT IT.
THOOOOM

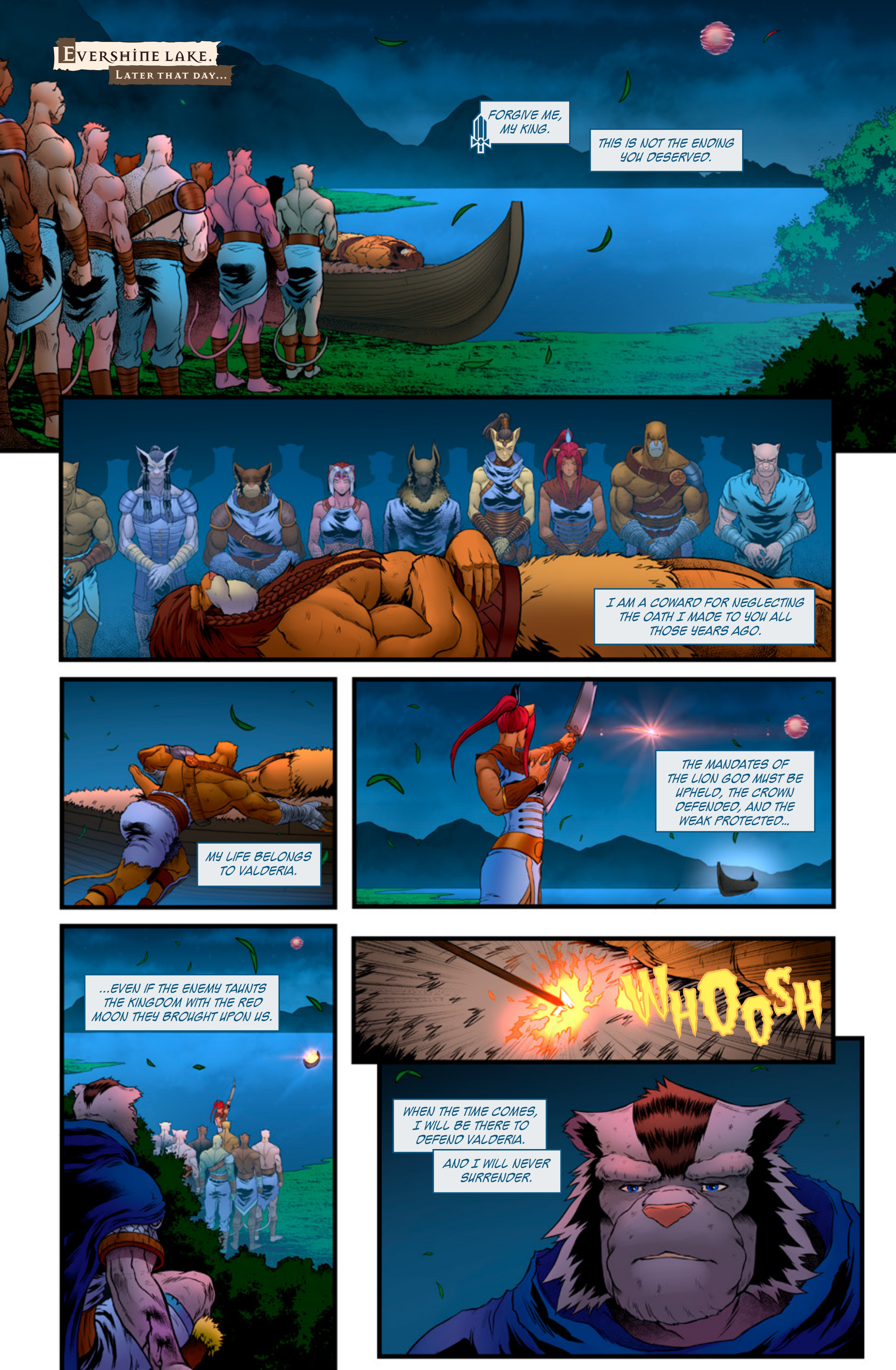

THIS IS HORSE DUNG!
IF KELTHAN WERE HERE, WE'D BE WELL ON OUR WAY BY NOW.
MEKKAR, I MISS HIM TOO.
BUT WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER OR WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE.
YEAH, YEAH.
IF YOU TWO ARE DONE...
...I MIGHT BE ABLE TO WEAKEN ITS PROTECTION OVER THE ICE, SO *ALL* OF YOU CAN TRY THAT AGAIN.
YOU SHOULD HAVE SAID SOMETHING SOONER.
SHH. LET ME CONCENTRATE.
NOW!

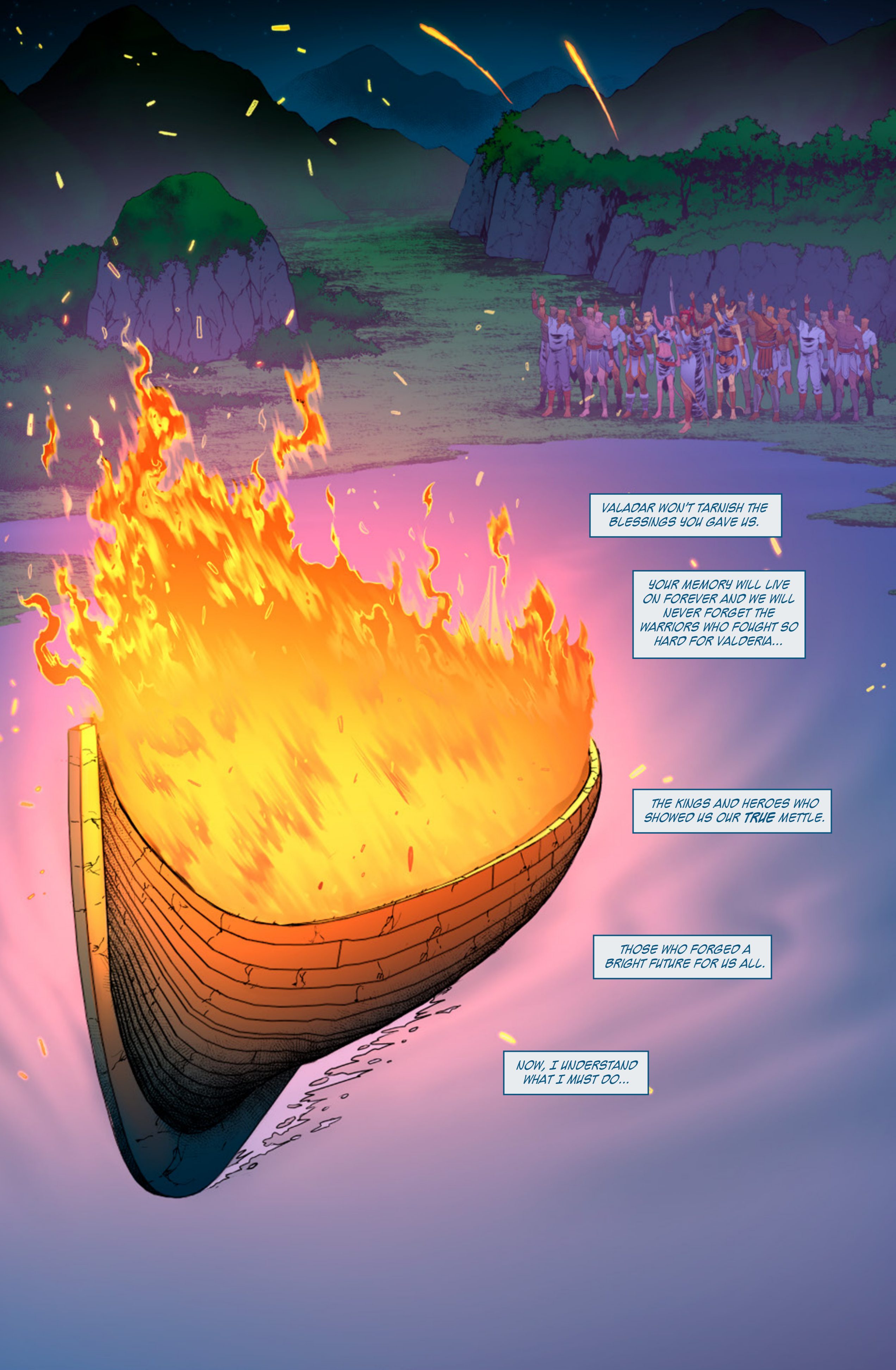

TING
THOOM
THUNK
WHAM
I DON'T THINK IT WORKED.
PATIENCE.
WAIT. LOOK!
CRSSSSSHHH

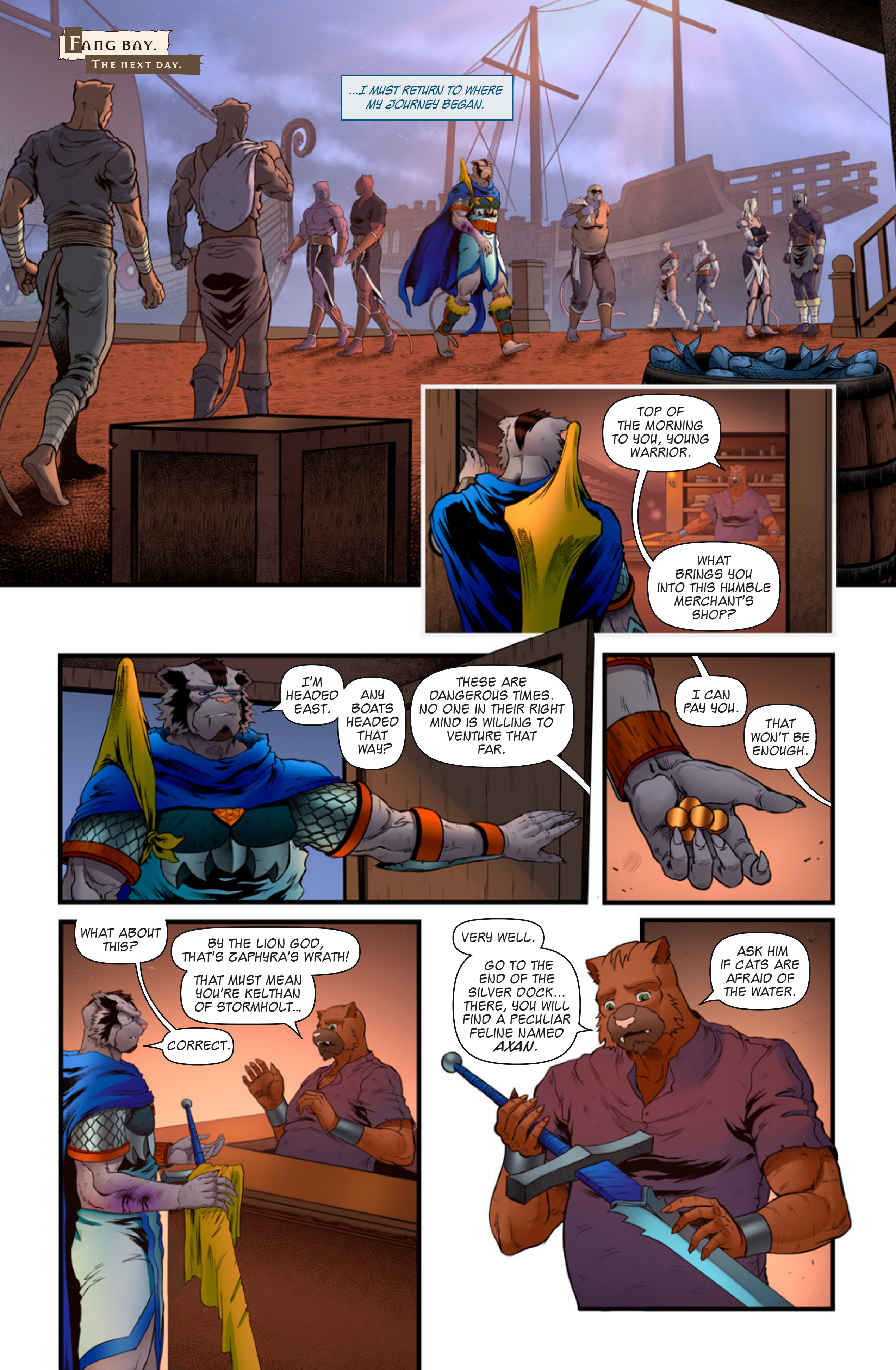

VIKAL CREST, THE PRIDELANDS.
MY QUEEN, I WAS TOLD YOU WERE LOOKING FOR ME.
HOW CAN I BE OF SERVICE TO YOU?
NATHARIEN, ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR JOURNEY TO THE ORACLE?
YES, QUEEN ADASTRIL. I LEAVE AT DAWN.
EXCELLENT. I WISH YOU SAFE TRAVELS.
WAS THAT ALL, MY QUEEN?
NO. THE LIZARD GOD HAS PIQUED THE INTEREST OF *MANY* FELINES ACROSS VALDERIA...
IT APPEARS AS THOUGH MYRTHALEN AND VALADAR ARE SUCCEEDING IN THEIR ENDEAVORS.
>SIGH<
YES, IT APPEARS AS THOUGH MY DAUGHTER'S BETRAYAL HAS GARNERED MUCH SUPPORT.
WHERE I COME FROM, THE LIZARD GOD IS THE EMBODIMENT OF EVIL.
MANY CLAIM HE'S REAL, WHILE OTHERS CONSIDER HIS EXISTENCE NOTHING MORE THAN A MYTH.
IT'S HARD NOT TO BELIEVE IN HIS EXISTENCE WHEN THERE IS A BLOOD MOON OVER OUR SKIES.
AS SOON AS THE BATTLECATS RETURN, THEY CAN GO AFTER THE BLOOD PRIESTS AND RETURN *TEGEI'S MOON* TO ITS NATURAL STATE.

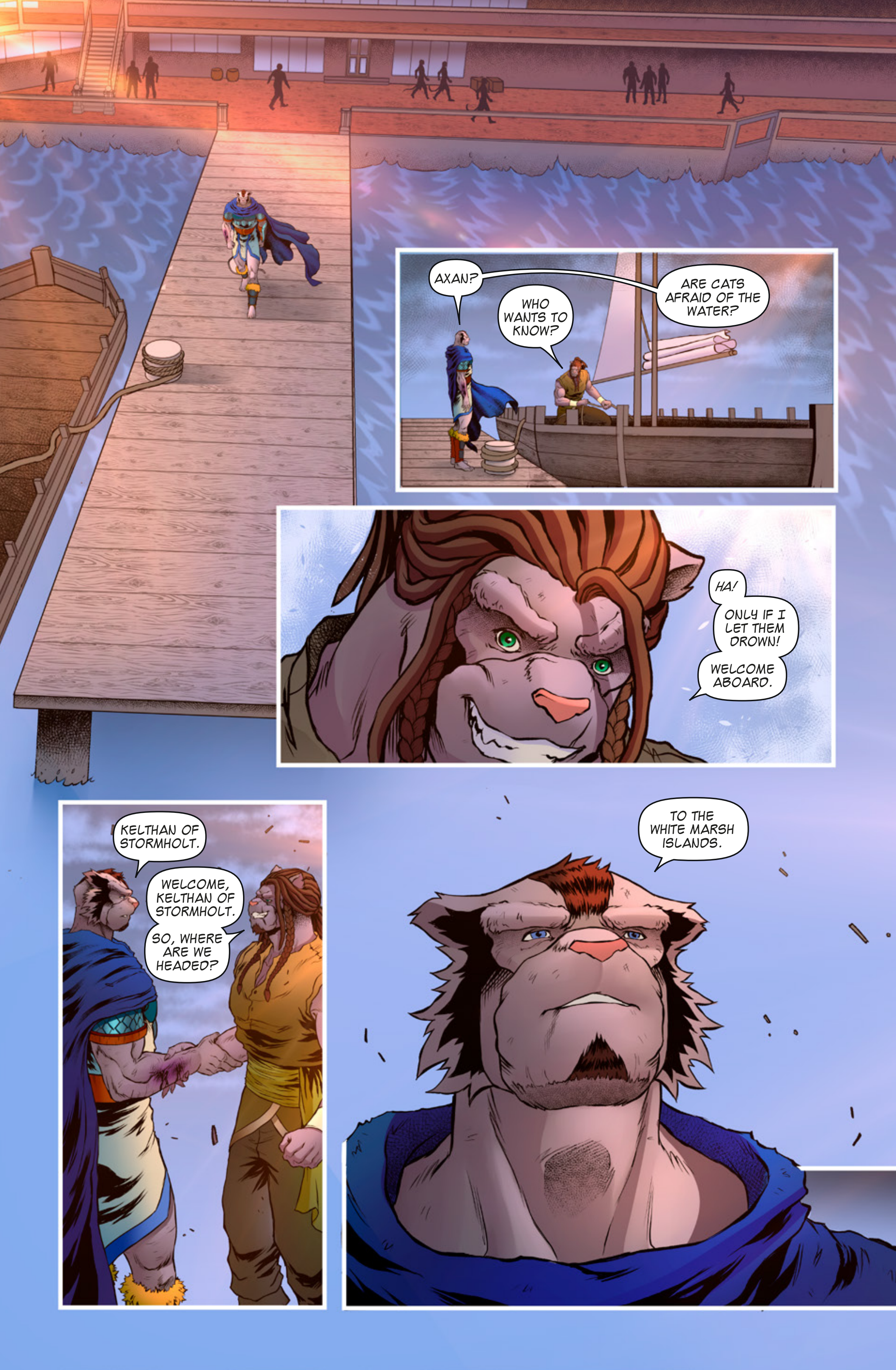

SPEAKING OF THE BATTLECATS, I NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU.
APOLOGIZE FOR WHAT, MY QUEEN?
I SHOULD HAVE NEVER DOUBTED THEM.
NO APOLOGY NECESSARY.
I KNEW YOU WOULD EVENTUALLY SEE THE TRUTH.
YES, I DO.
AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED, I KNOW THAT VALDERIA DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST VALADAR WITHOUT THEM.
THE NEXT TIME YOU SEE THEM, PLEASE TELL THEM HOW BLESSED I AM TO HAVE THEM BY MY SIDE.
TELL THEM HOW GRATEFUL I AM FOR EVERYTHING THEY DID FOR MY HUSBAND.
WHY DON'T YOU TELL THEM YOURSELF? THEY'RE JUST OUTSIDE...
WHAT? HOW DO YOU--
LATELY, I'VE BEEN SPENDING SO MUCH TIME WITH THEM THAT IT'S HARD FOR MY NOSE *NOT* TO PICK UP THEIR SCENTS.


I'M SORRY WE COULDN'T DO MORE, MY QUEEN...
...BUT AT LEAST NOW WE CAN GIVE KING ERAMAD III A PROPER BURIAL.
HE DESERVES THAT MUCH.
STAND, KALEERA OF GREENSPYRE.
THANK YOU SO MUCH.
I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU SOONER.


EVERSHINE LAKE.
LATER THAT DAY...
FORGIVE ME, MY KING.
THIS IS NOT THE ENDING YOU DESERVED.
I AM A COWARD FOR NEGLECTING THE OATH I MADE TO YOU ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
MY LIFE BELONGS TO VALDERIA.
THE MANDATES OF THE LION GOD MUST BE UPHELD, THE CROWN DEFENDED, AND THE WEAK PROTECTED...
...EVEN IF THE ENEMY TAUNTS THE KINGDOM WITH THE RED MOON THEY BROUGHT UPON US.
WHOOSH
WHEN THE TIME COMES, I WILL BE THERE TO DEFEND VALDERIA.
AND I WILL NEVER SURRENDER.

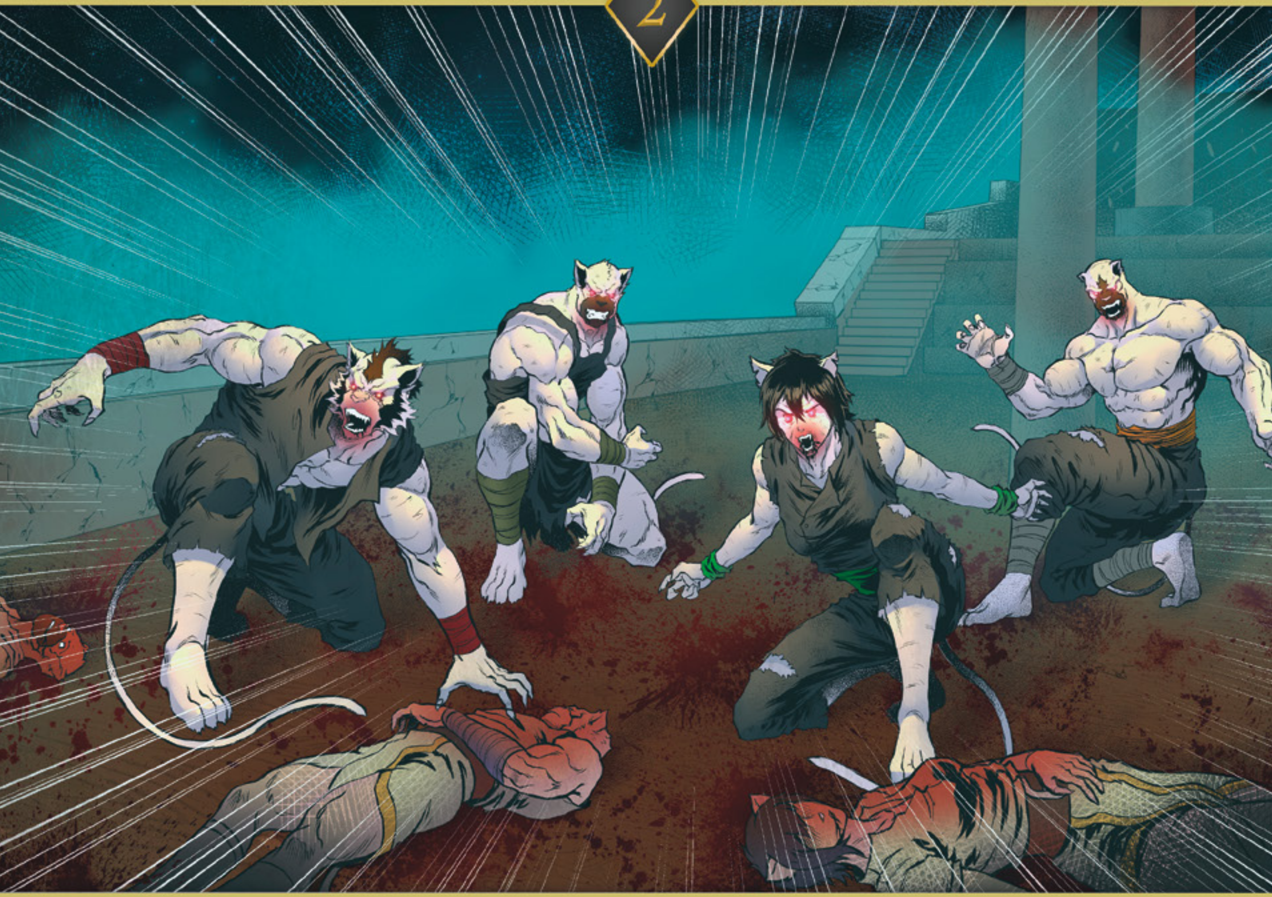

VALADAR WON'T TARNISH THE BLESSINGS YOU GAVE US.
YOUR MEMORY WILL LIVE ON FOREVER AND WE WILL NEVER FORGET THE WARRIORS WHO FOUGHT SO HARD FOR VALDERIA...
THE KINGS AND HEROES WHO SHOWED US OUR **TRUE** METTLE.
THOSE WHO FORGED A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR US ALL.
NOW, I UNDERSTAND WHAT I MUST DO...


FANG BAY.
THE NEXT DAY.
...I MUST RETURN TO WHERE MY JOURNEY BEGAN.
TOP OF THE MORNING TO YOU, YOUNG WARRIOR.
WHAT BRINGS YOU INTO THIS HUMBLE MERCHANT'S SHOP?
I'M HEADED EAST.
ANY BOATS HEADED THAT WAY?
THESE ARE DANGEROUS TIMES. NO ONE IN THEIR RIGHT MIND IS WILLING TO VENTURE THAT FAR.
I CAN PAY YOU.
THAT WON'T BE ENOUGH.
WHAT ABOUT THIS?
BY THE LION GOD, THAT'S ZAPHYRA'S WRATH!
THAT MUST MEAN YOU'RE KELTHAN OF STORMHOLT...
CORRECT.
VERY WELL.
GO TO THE END OF THE SILVER DOCK... THERE, YOU WILL FIND A PECULIAR FELINE NAMED AXAN.
ASK HIM IF CATS ARE AFRAID OF THE WATER.


AXAN?
WHO WANTS TO KNOW?
ARE CATS AFRAID OF THE WATER?
HA!
ONLY IF I LET THEM DROWN!
WELCOME ABOARD.
KELTHAN OF STORMHOLT.
WELCOME, KELTHAN OF STORMHOLT.
SO, WHERE ARE WE HEADED?
TO THE WHITE MARSH ISLANDS.

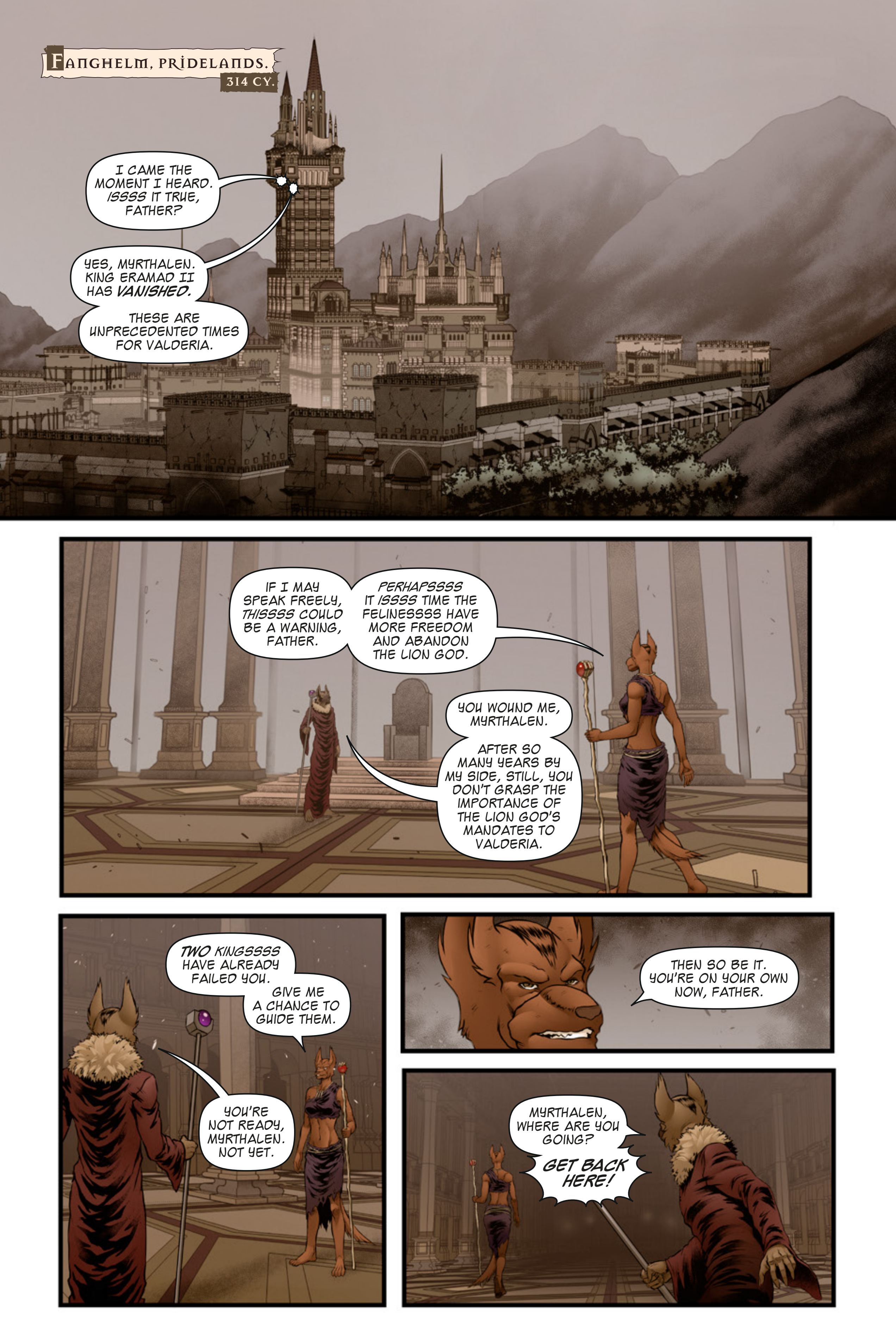
LIFE WITHOUT BALANCE

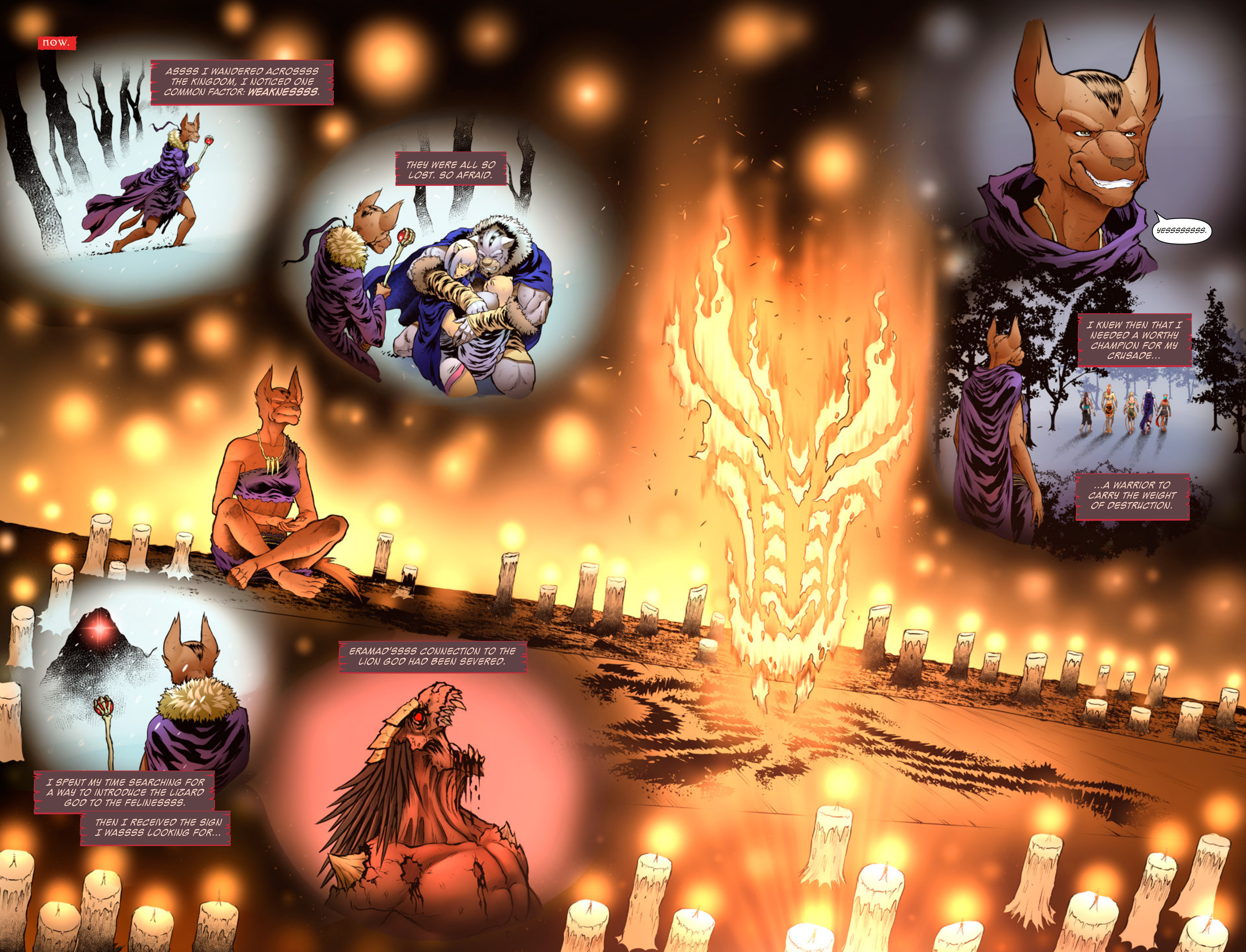
2

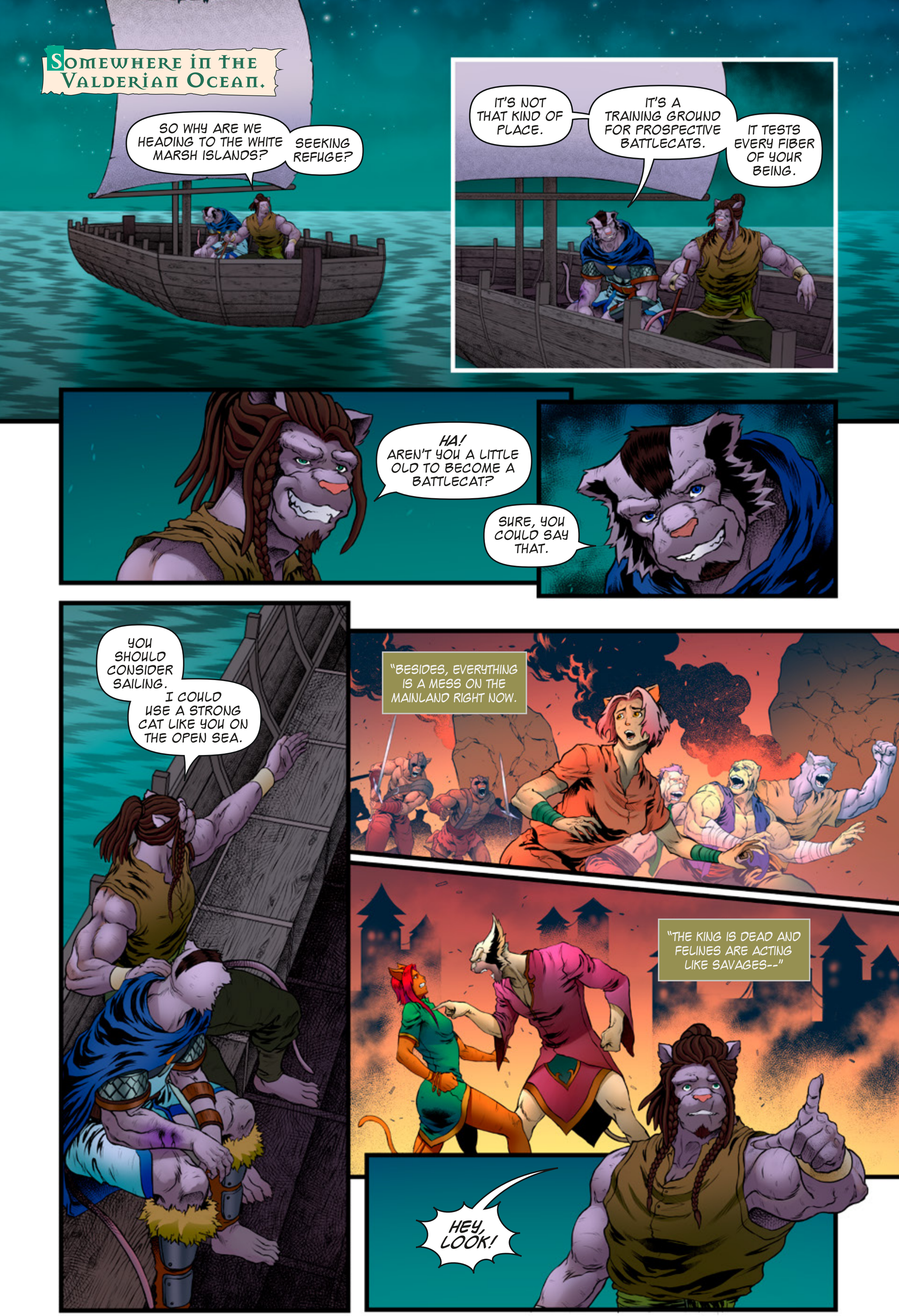


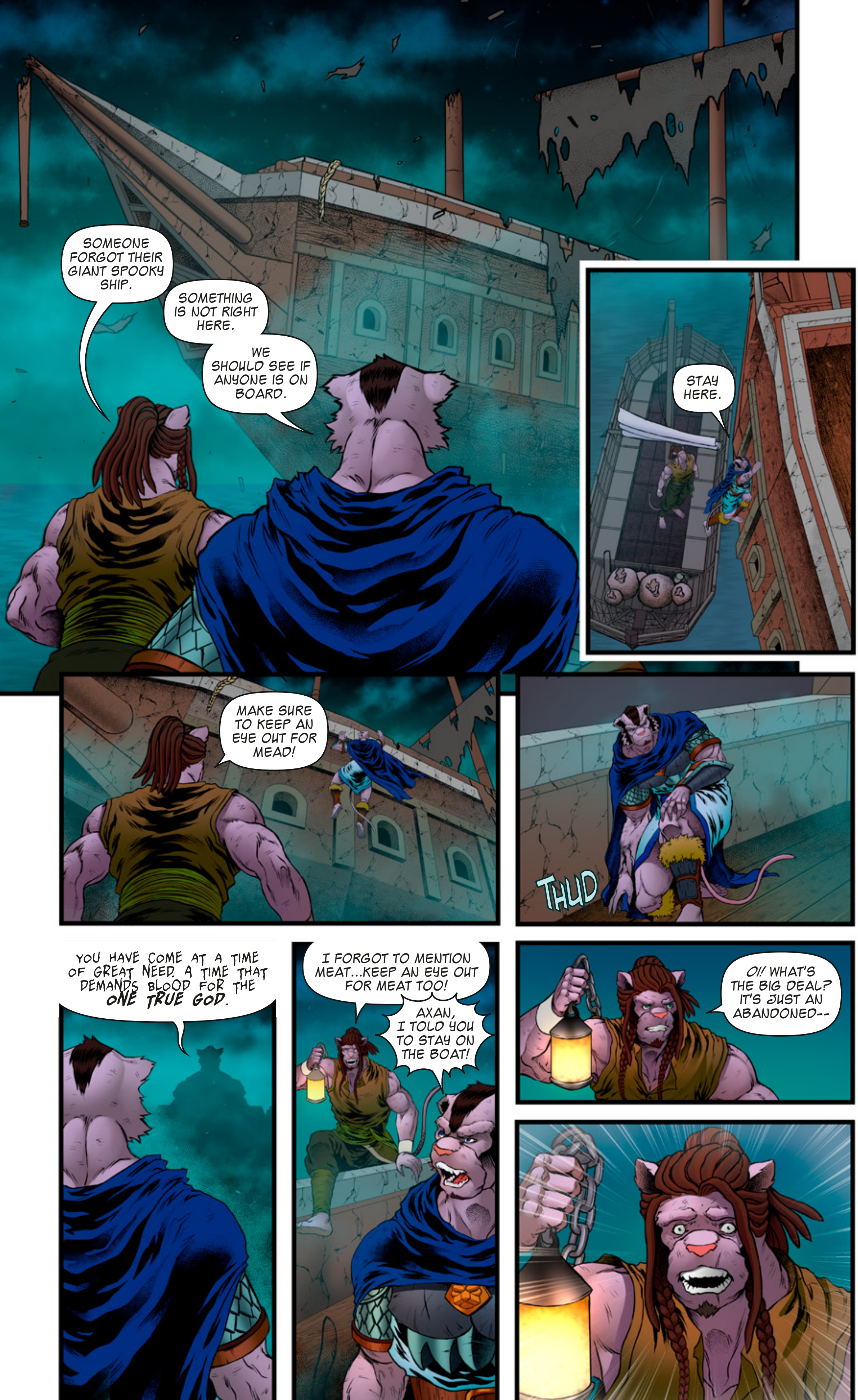
Chapter Two

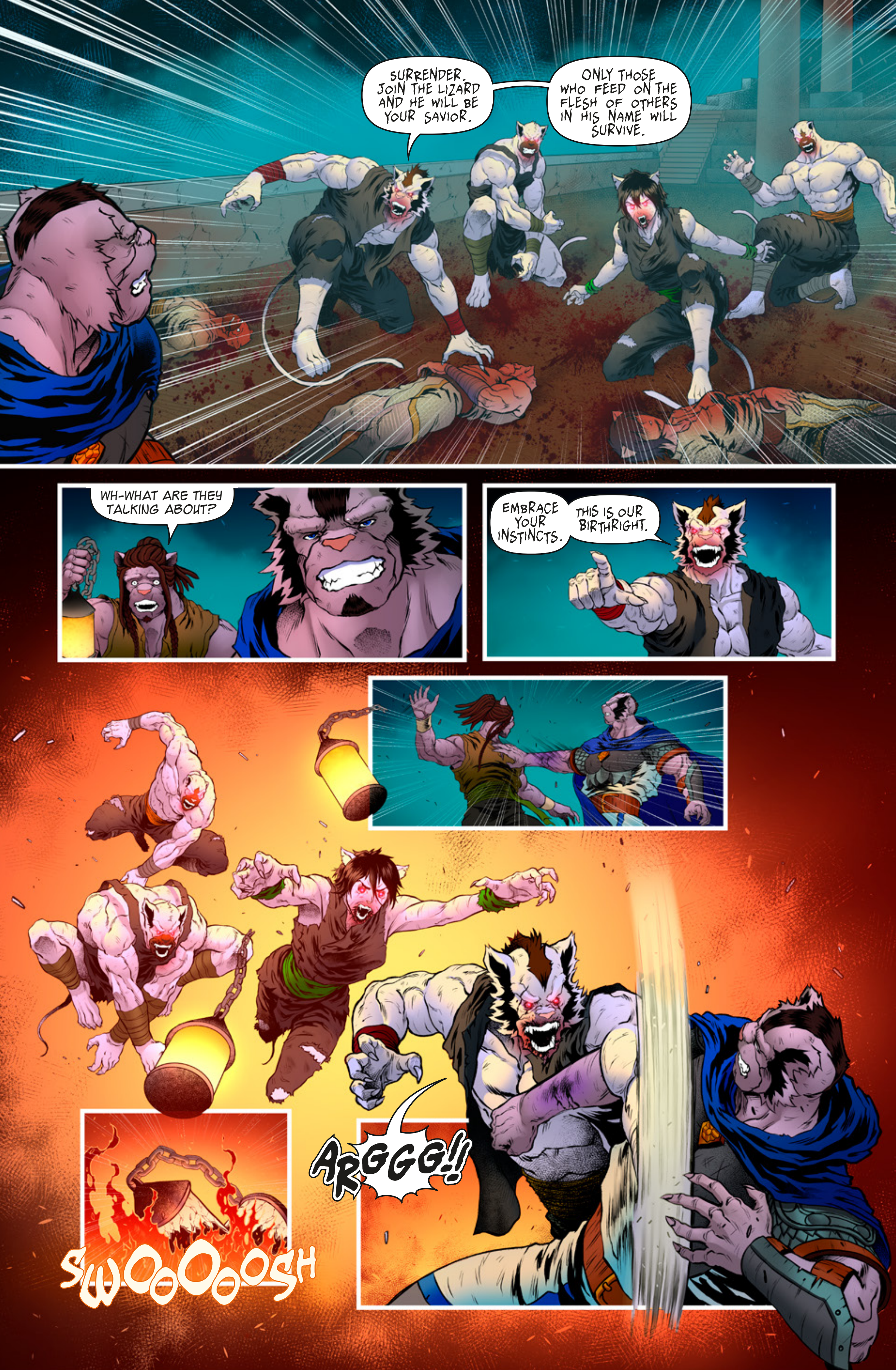
BATTLECATS®

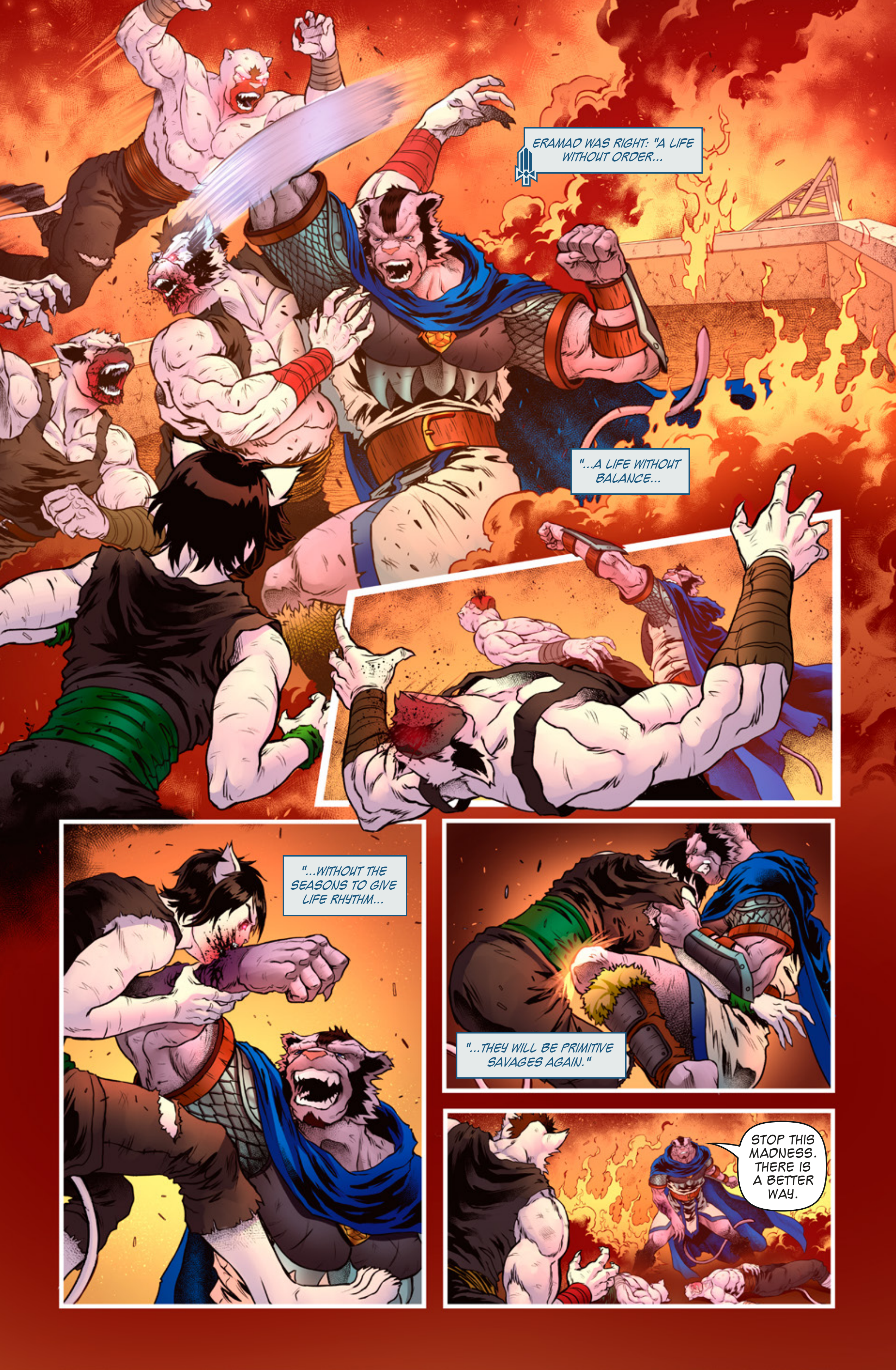

FANGHELM, PRIDELANDS. 314 CY.
I CAME THE MOMENT I HEARD. ISSSS IT TRUE, FATHER?
YES, MYRTHALEN. KING ERAMAD II HAS VANISHED.
THESE ARE UNPRECEDENTED TIMES FOR VALDERIA.
IF I MAY SPEAK FREELY, THISSSS COULD BE A WARNING, FATHER.
PERHAPSSSS IT ISSSS TIME THE FELINESSSS HAVE MORE FREEDOM AND ABANDON THE LION GOD.
YOU WOUND ME, MYRTHALEN.
AFTER SO MANY YEARS BY MY SIDE, STILL, YOU DON'T GRASP THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LION GOD'S MANDATES TO VALDERIA.
TWO KINGSSSS HAVE ALREADY FAILED YOU.
GIVE ME A CHANCE TO GUIDE THEM.
YOU'RE NOT READY, MYRTHALEN. NOT YET.
THEN SO BE IT. YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN NOW, FATHER.
MYRTHALEN, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
GET BACK HERE!

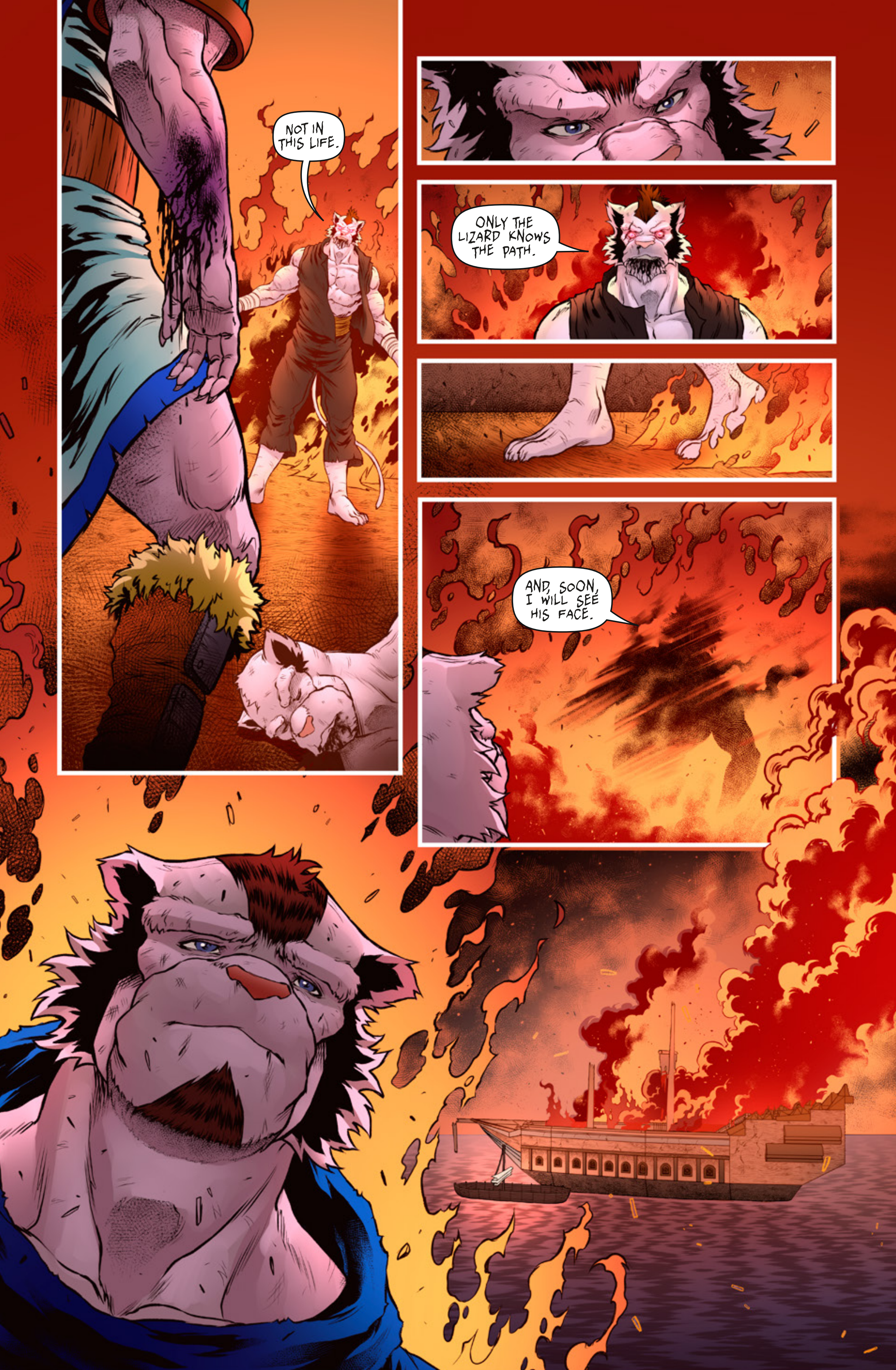

now.
ASSSS I WANDERED ACROSSSS THE KINGDOM, I NOTICED ONE COMMON FACTOR: **WEAKNESSSS.**
THEY WERE ALL SO LOST. SO AFRAID.
I SPENT MY TIME SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO INTRODUCE THE LIZARD GOD TO THE FELINESSSS.
THEN I RECEIVED THE SIGN I WASSSS LOOKING FOR...
ERAMAD'SSSS CONNECTION TO THE LION GOD HAD BEEN SEVERED.
YESSSSSSSS.
I KNEW THEN THAT I NEEDED A WORTHY CHAMPION FOR MY CRUSADE...
...A WARRIOR TO CARRY THE WEIGHT OF DESTRUCTION.

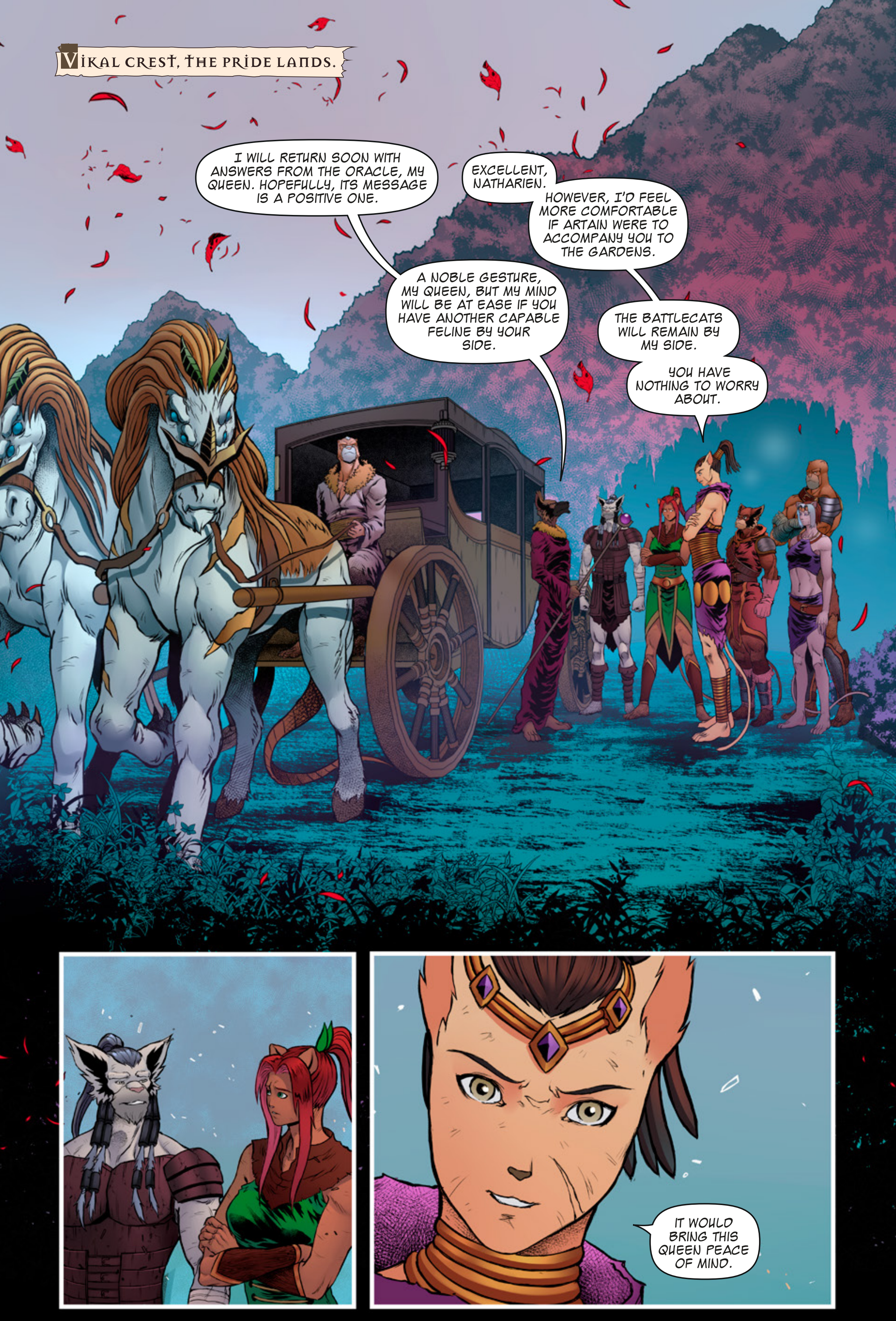

Somewhere in the Valderian Ocean.
SO WHY ARE WE HEADING TO THE WHITE MARSH ISLANDS?
SEEKING REFUGE?
IT'S NOT THAT KIND OF PLACE.
IT'S A TRAINING GROUND FOR PROSPECTIVE BATTLECATS.
IT TESTS EVERY FIBER OF YOUR BEING.
HA! AREN'T YOU A LITTLE OLD TO BECOME A BATTLECAT?
SURE, YOU COULD SAY THAT.
YOU SHOULD CONSIDER SAILING.
I COULD USE A STRONG CAT LIKE YOU ON THE OPEN SEA.
"BESIDES, EVERYTHING IS A MESS ON THE MAINLAND RIGHT NOW.
"THE KING IS DEAD AND FELINES ARE ACTING LIKE SAVAGES--"
HEY, LOOK!

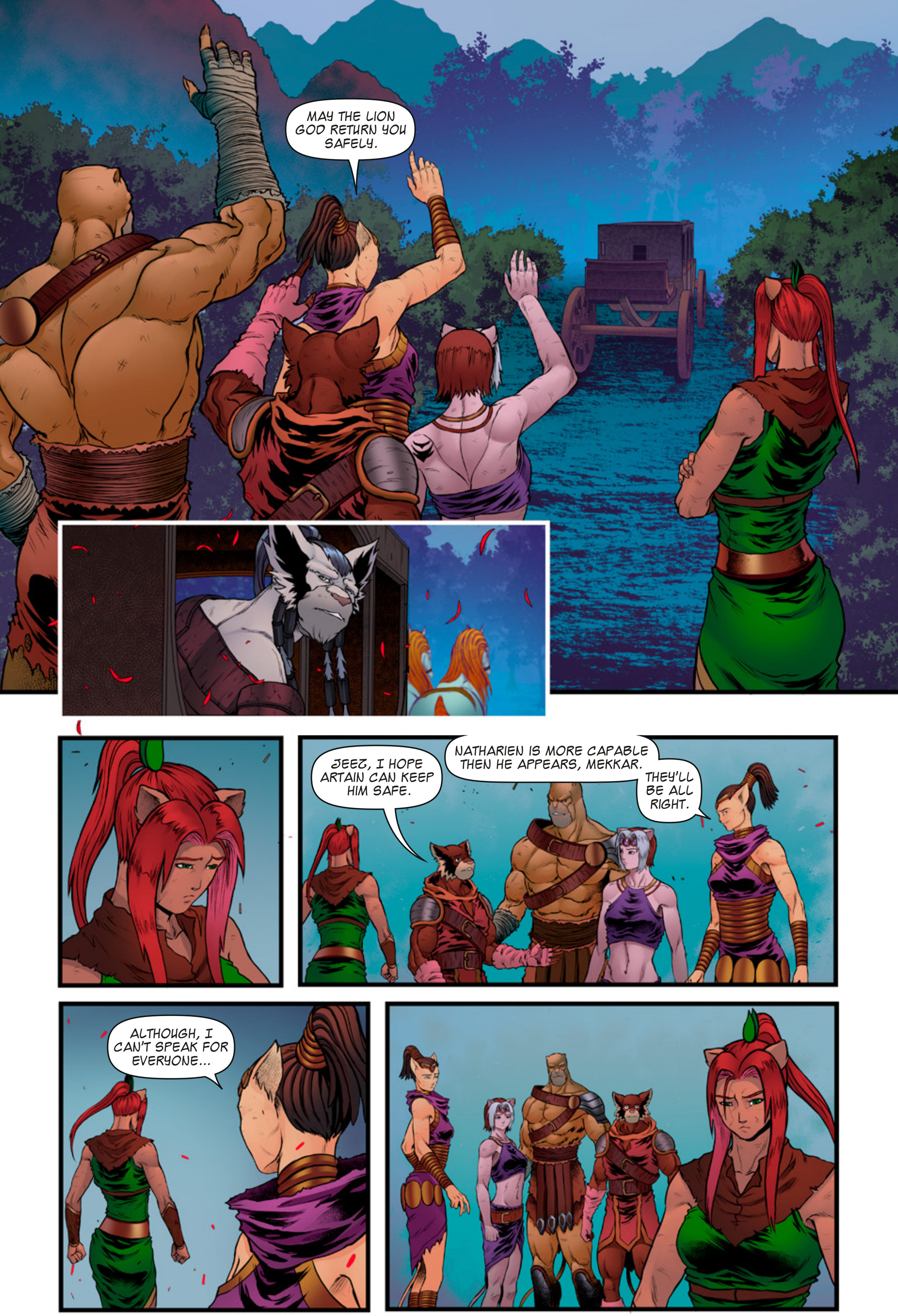

SOMEONE FORGOT THEIR GIANT SPOOKY SHIP.
SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT HERE.
WE SHOULD SEE IF ANYONE IS ON BOARD.
STAY HERE.
MAKE SURE TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR MEAD!
THUD
YOU HAVE COME AT A TIME OF GREAT NEED. A TIME THAT DEMANDS BLOOD FOR THE *ONE TRUE GOD.*
I FORGOT TO MENTION MEAT...KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR MEAT TOO!
AXAN, I TOLD YOU TO STAY ON THE BOAT!
OI! WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? IT'S JUST AN ABANDONED--

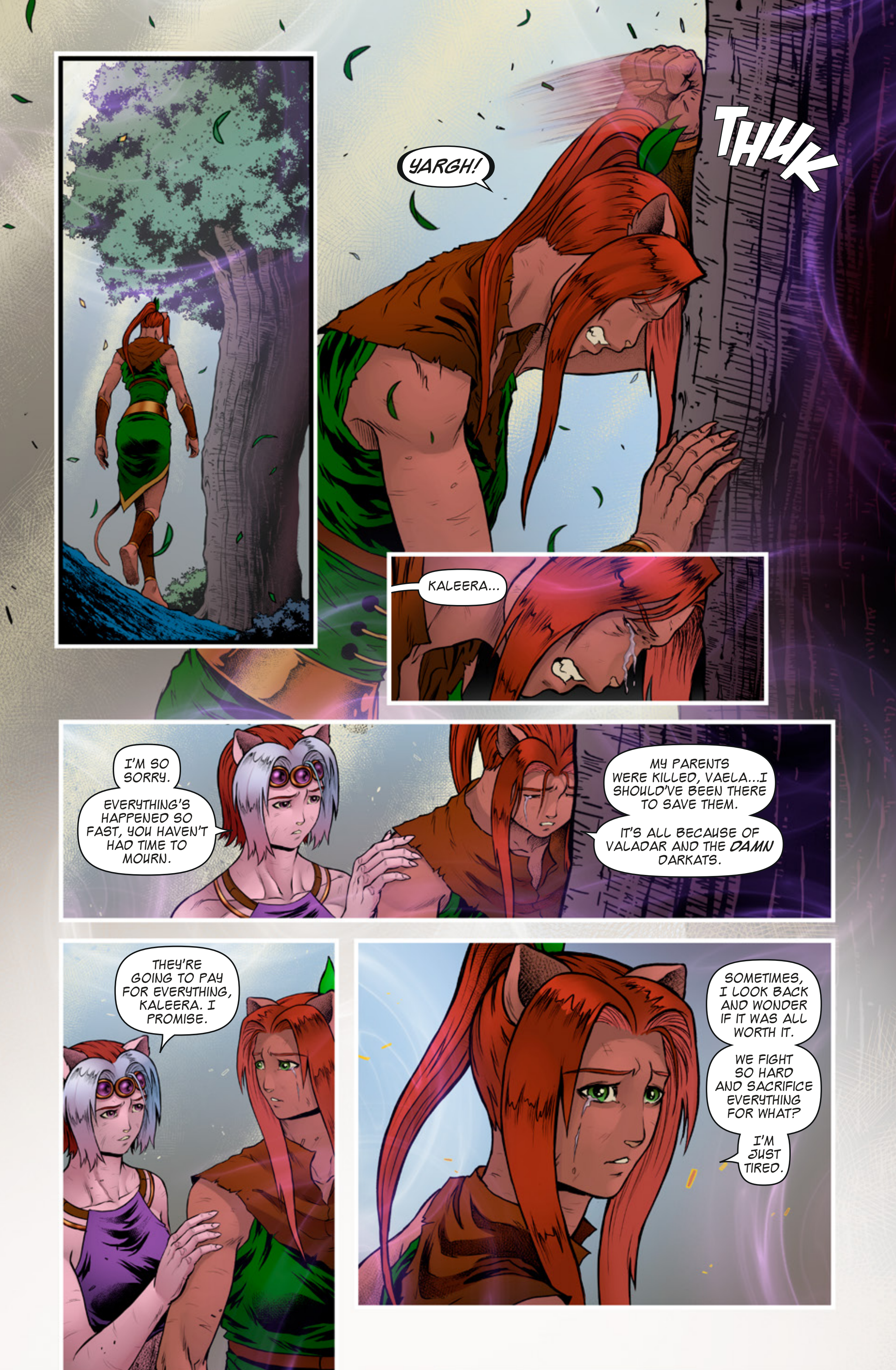

SURRENDER. JOIN THE LIZARD AND HE WILL BE YOUR SAVIOR.
ONLY THOSE WHO FEED ON THE FLESH OF OTHERS IN HIS NAME WILL SURVIVE.
WH-WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?
EMBRACE YOUR INSTINCTS.
THIS IS OUR BIRTHRIGHT.
ARGGG!!
SWOOOOOSH

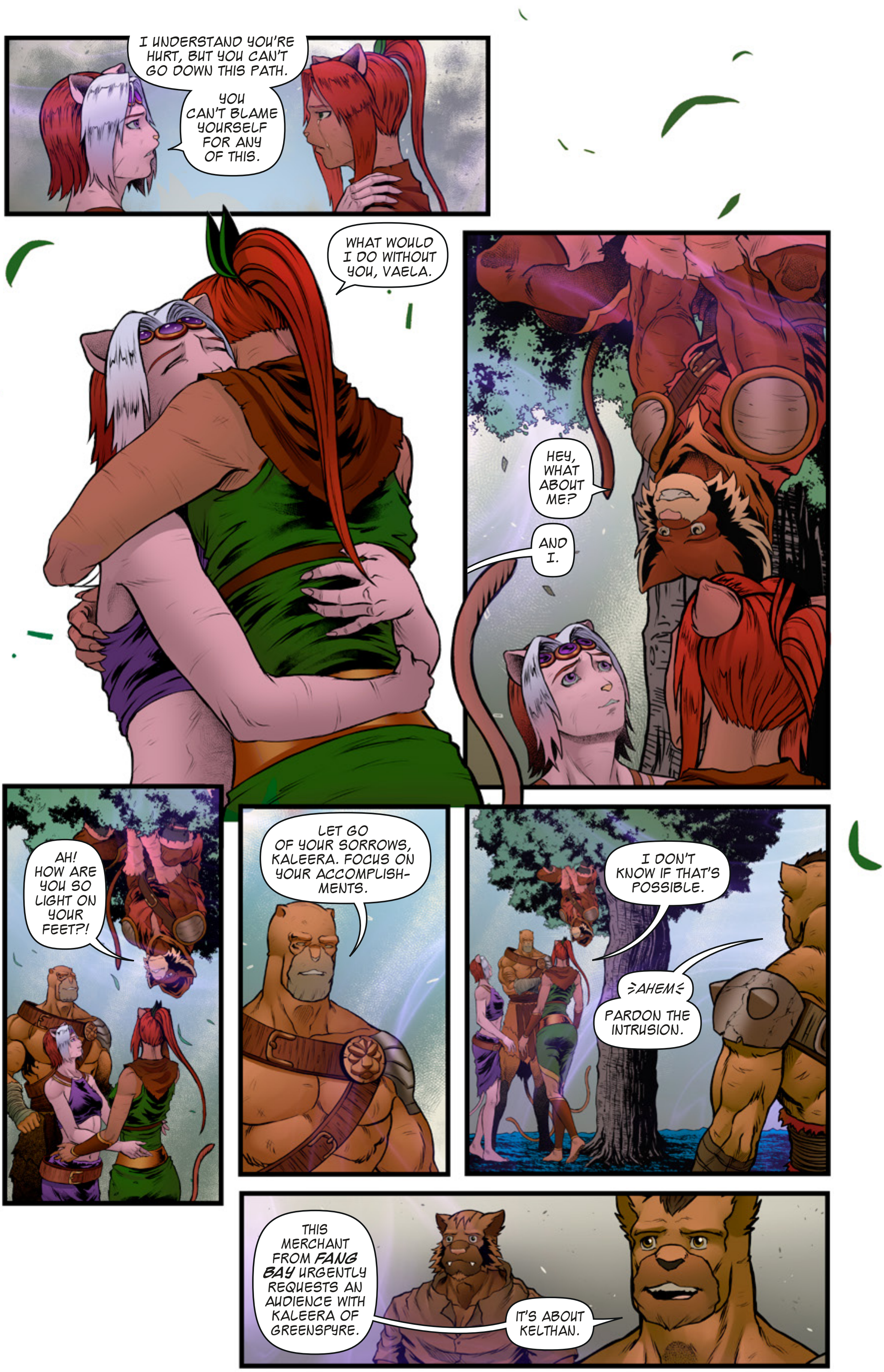

ERAMAD WAS RIGHT: "A LIFE WITHOUT ORDER...
"...A LIFE WITHOUT BALANCE...
"...WITHOUT THE SEASONS TO GIVE LIFE RHYTHM...
"...THEY WILL BE PRIMITIVE SAVAGES AGAIN."
STOP THIS MADNESS. THERE IS A BETTER WAY.

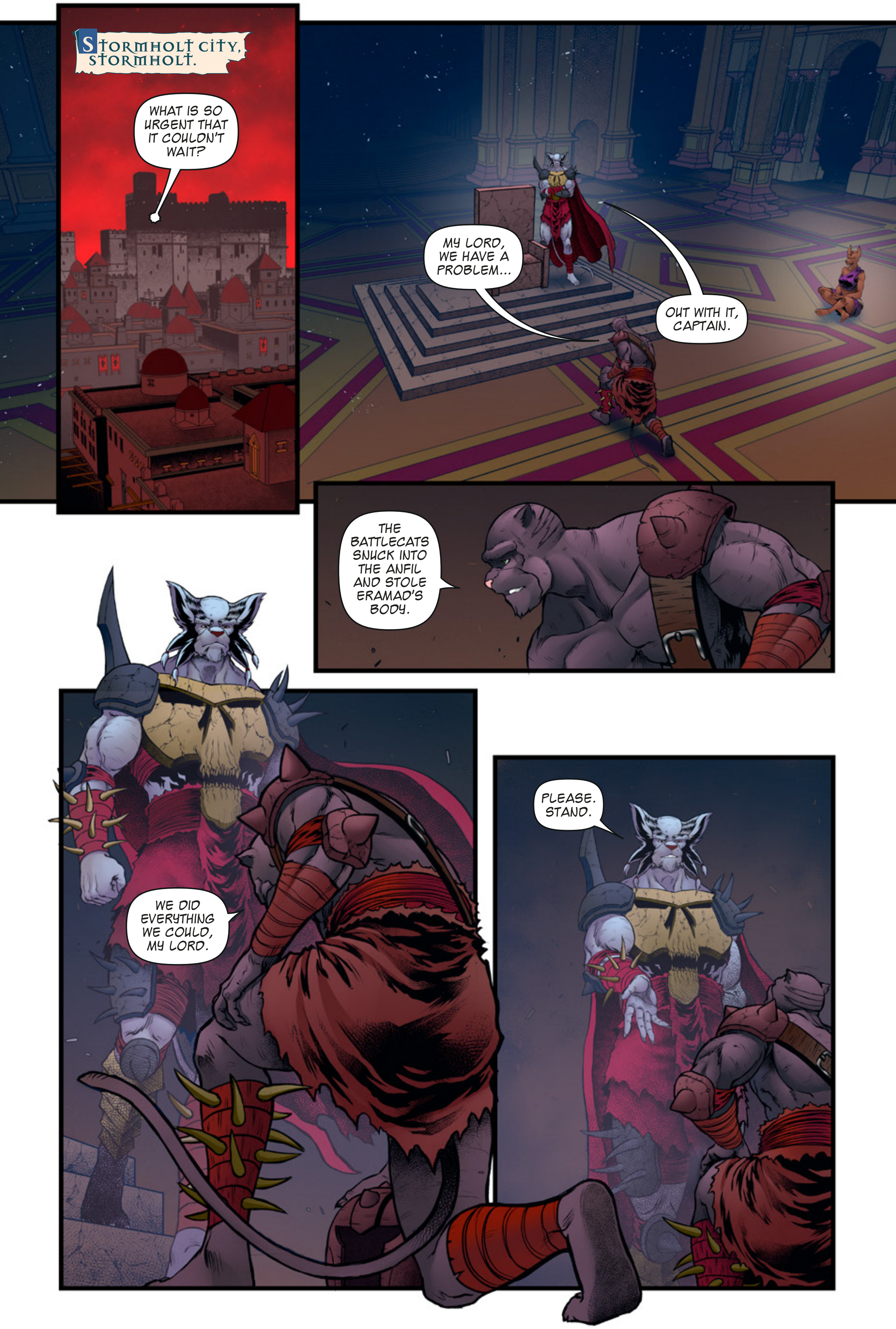

NOT IN THIS LIFE.
ONLY THE LIZARD KNOWS THE PATH.
AND, SOON, I WILL SEE HIS FACE.

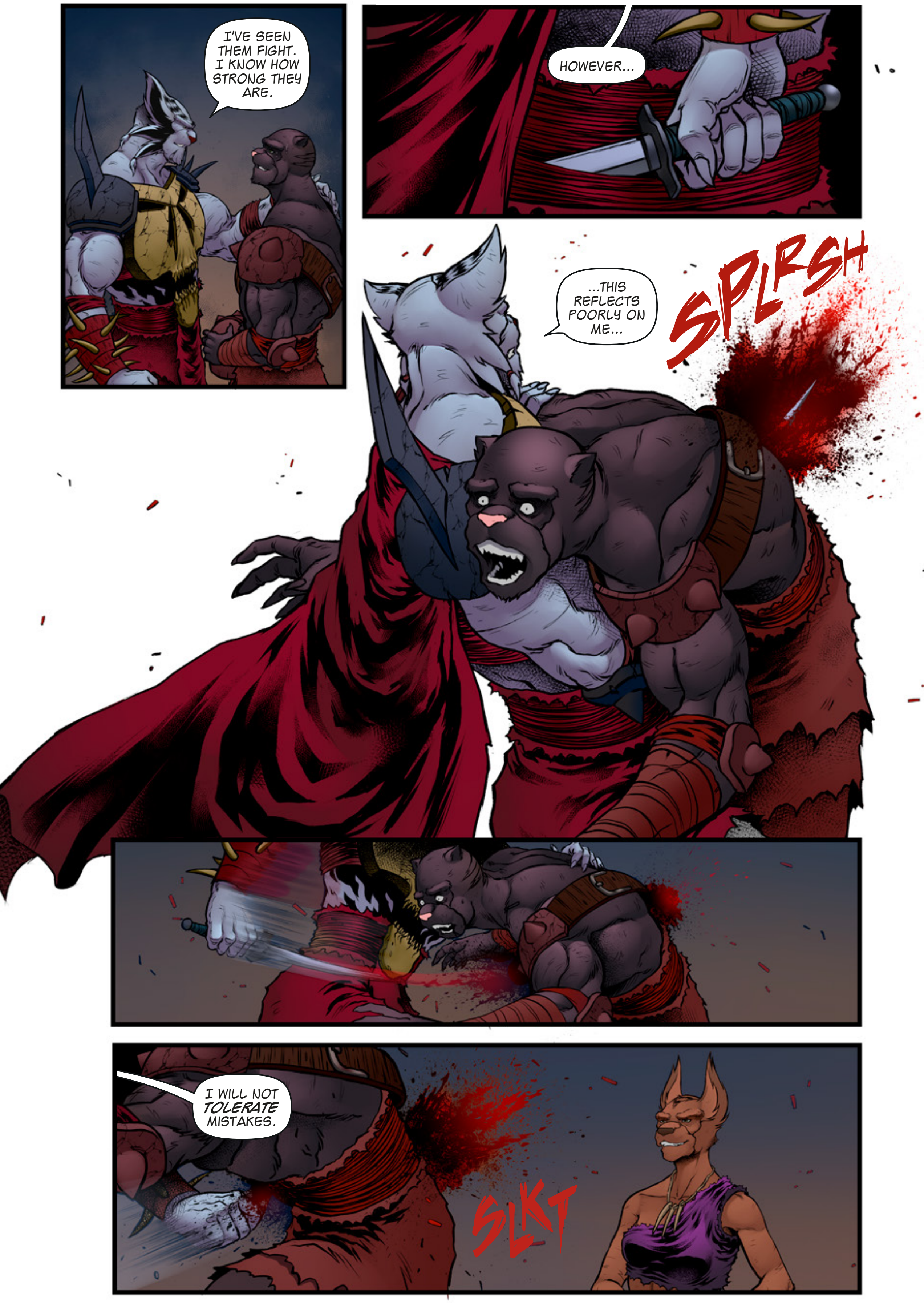

VIKAL CREST, THE PRIDE LANDS.
I WILL RETURN SOON WITH ANSWERS FROM THE ORACLE, MY QUEEN. HOPEFULLY, ITS MESSAGE IS A POSITIVE ONE.
EXCELLENT, NATHARIEN.
HOWEVER, I'D FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE IF ARTAIN WERE TO ACCOMPANY YOU TO THE GARDENS.
A NOBLE GESTURE, MY QUEEN, BUT MY MIND WILL BE AT EASE IF YOU HAVE ANOTHER CAPABLE FELINE BY YOUR SIDE.
THE BATTLECATS WILL REMAIN BY MY SIDE.
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
IT WOULD BRING THIS QUEEN PEACE OF MIND.

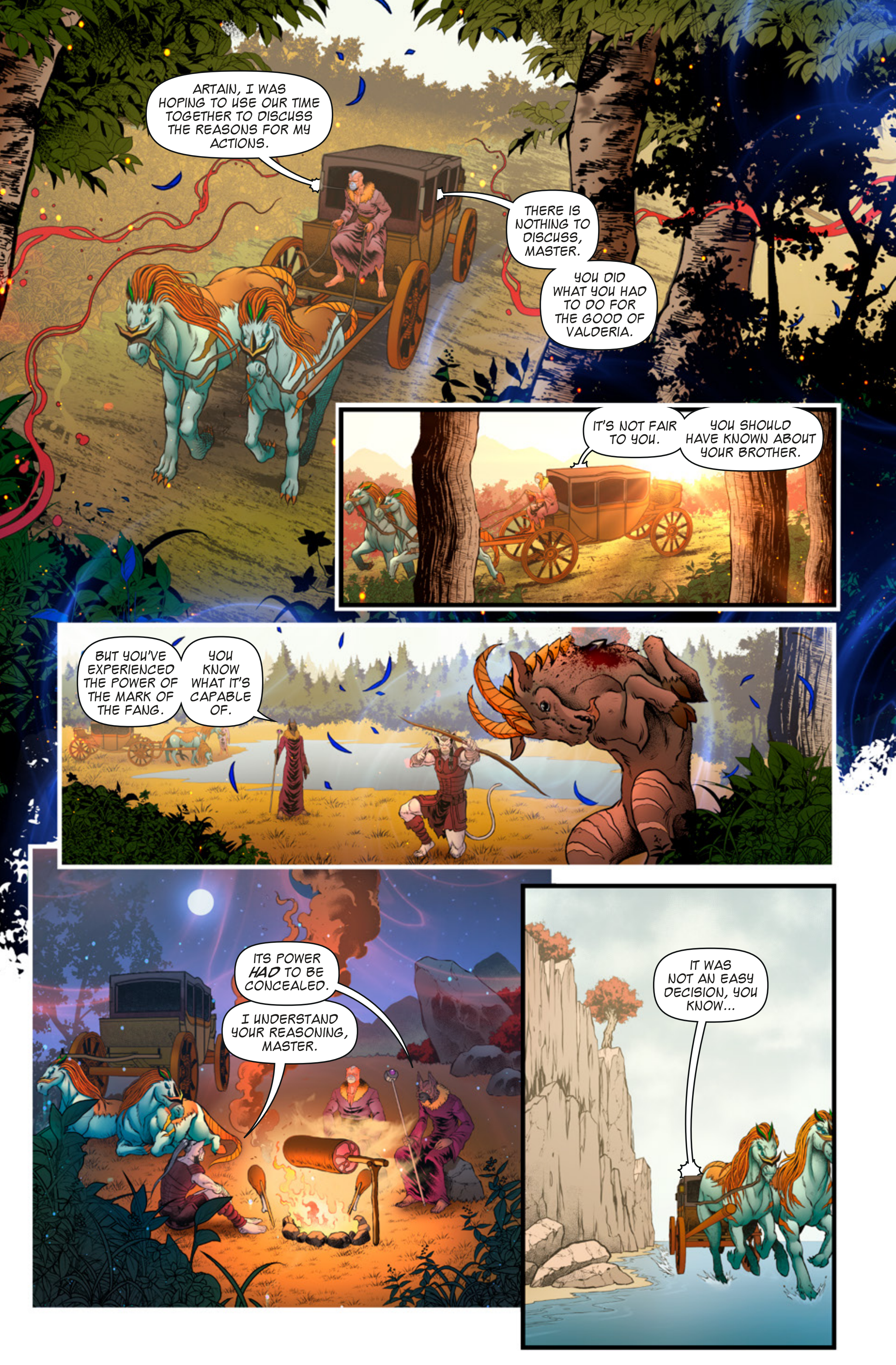

MAY THE LION GOD RETURN YOU SAFELY.
JEEZ, I HOPE ARTAIN CAN KEEP HIM SAFE.
NATHARIEN IS MORE CAPABLE THEN HE APPEARS, MEKKAR.
THEY'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
ALTHOUGH, I CAN'T SPEAK FOR EVERYONE...

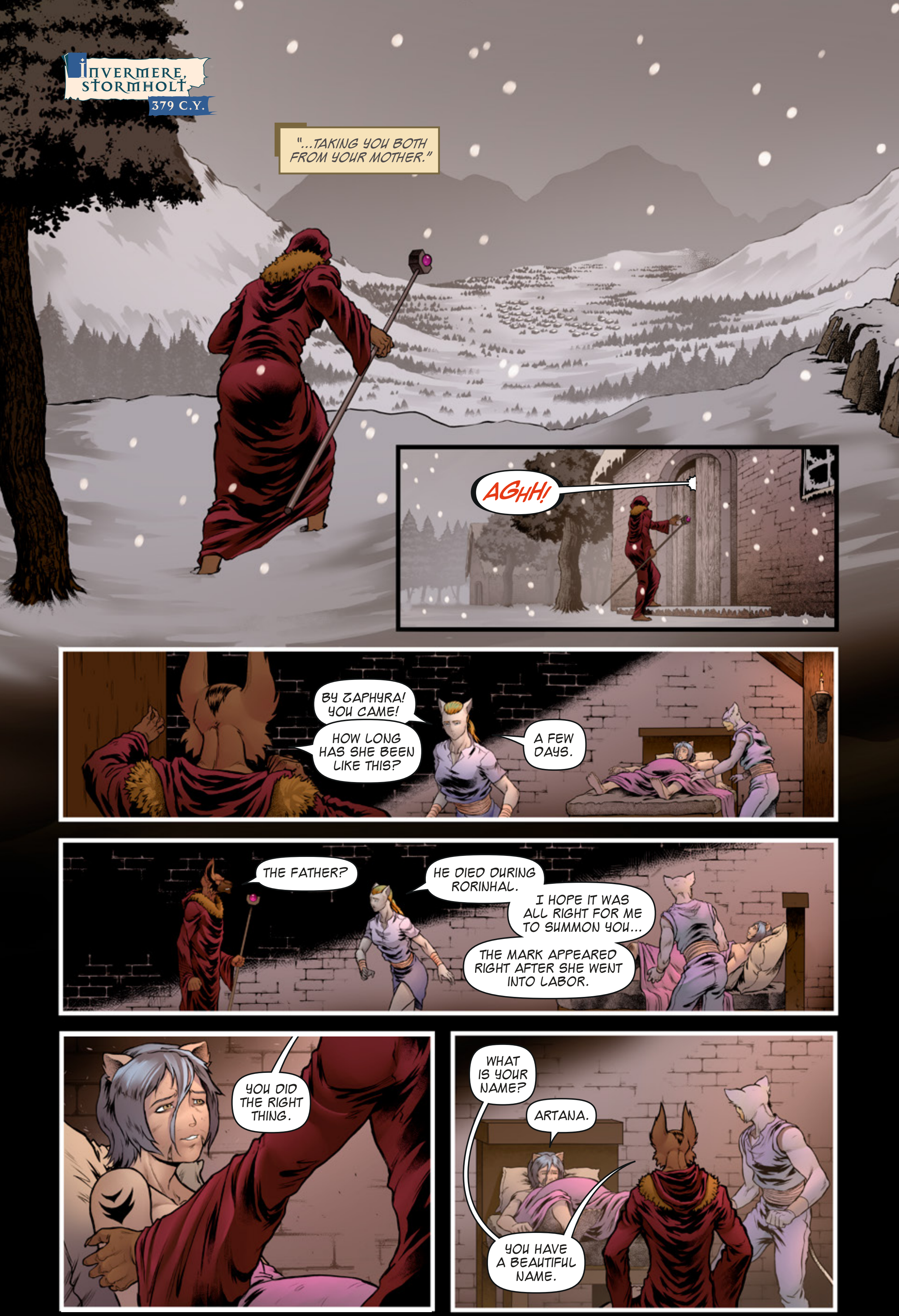

YARGH!
THUK
KALEERA...
I'M SO SORRY.
EVERYTHING'S HAPPENED SO FAST, YOU HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO MOURN.
MY PARENTS WERE KILLED, VAELA...I SHOULD'VE BEEN THERE TO SAVE THEM.
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF VALADAR AND THE *DAMN* DARKATS.
THEY'RE GOING TO PAY FOR EVERYTHING, KALEERA. I PROMISE.
SOMETIMES, I LOOK BACK AND WONDER IF IT WAS ALL WORTH IT.
WE FIGHT SO HARD AND SACRIFICE EVERYTHING FOR WHAT?
I'M JUST TIRED.

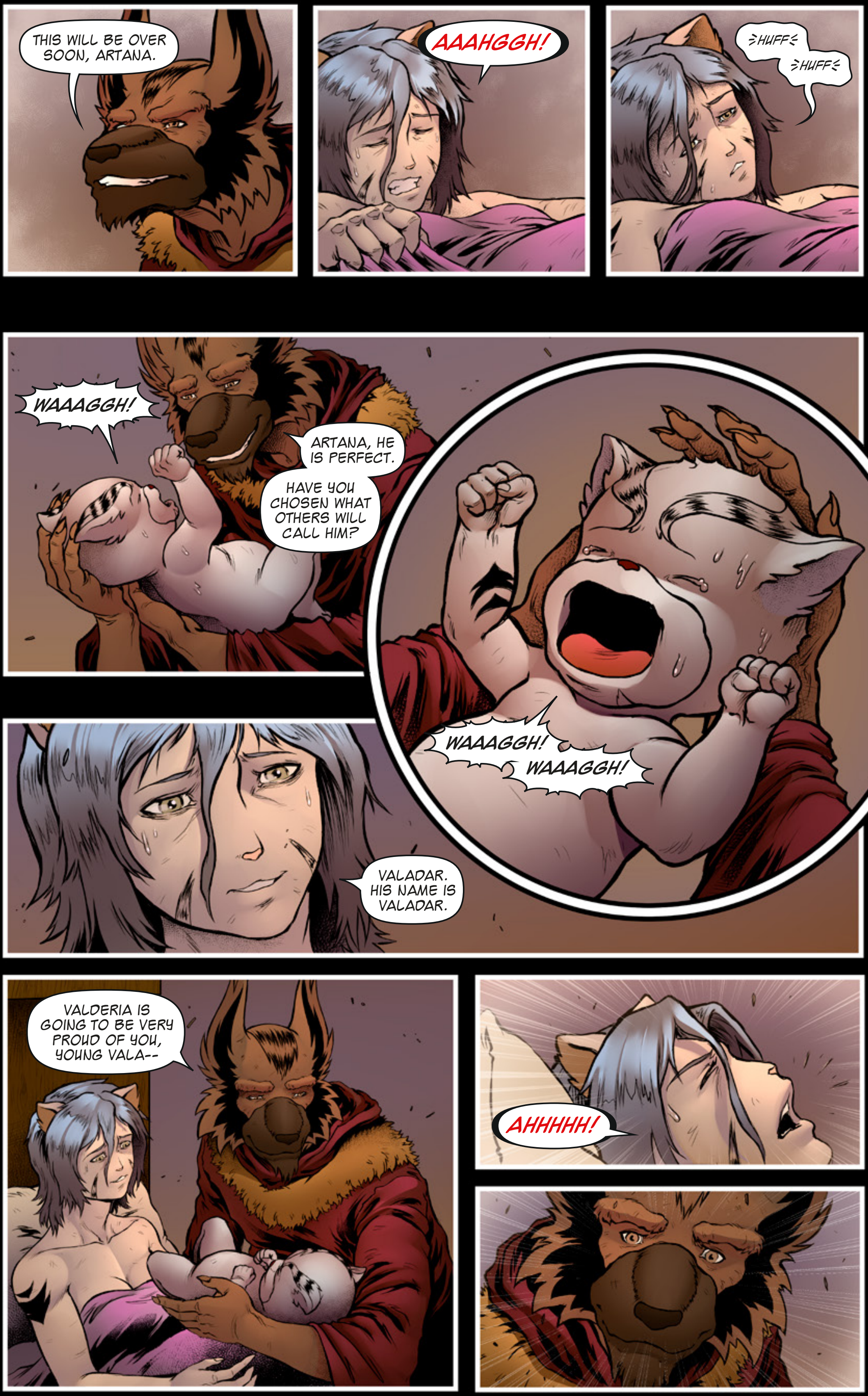

I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE HURT, BUT YOU CAN'T GO DOWN THIS PATH.
YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF FOR ANY OF THIS.
WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU, VAELA.
HEY, WHAT ABOUT ME?
AND I.
AH! HOW ARE YOU SO LIGHT ON YOUR FEET?!
LET GO OF YOUR SORROWS, KALEERA. FOCUS ON YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S POSSIBLE.
≥AHEM≤
PARDON THE INTRUSION.
THIS MERCHANT FROM ***FANG BAY*** URGENTLY REQUESTS AN AUDIENCE WITH KALEERA OF GREENSPYRE.
IT'S ABOUT KELTHAN.

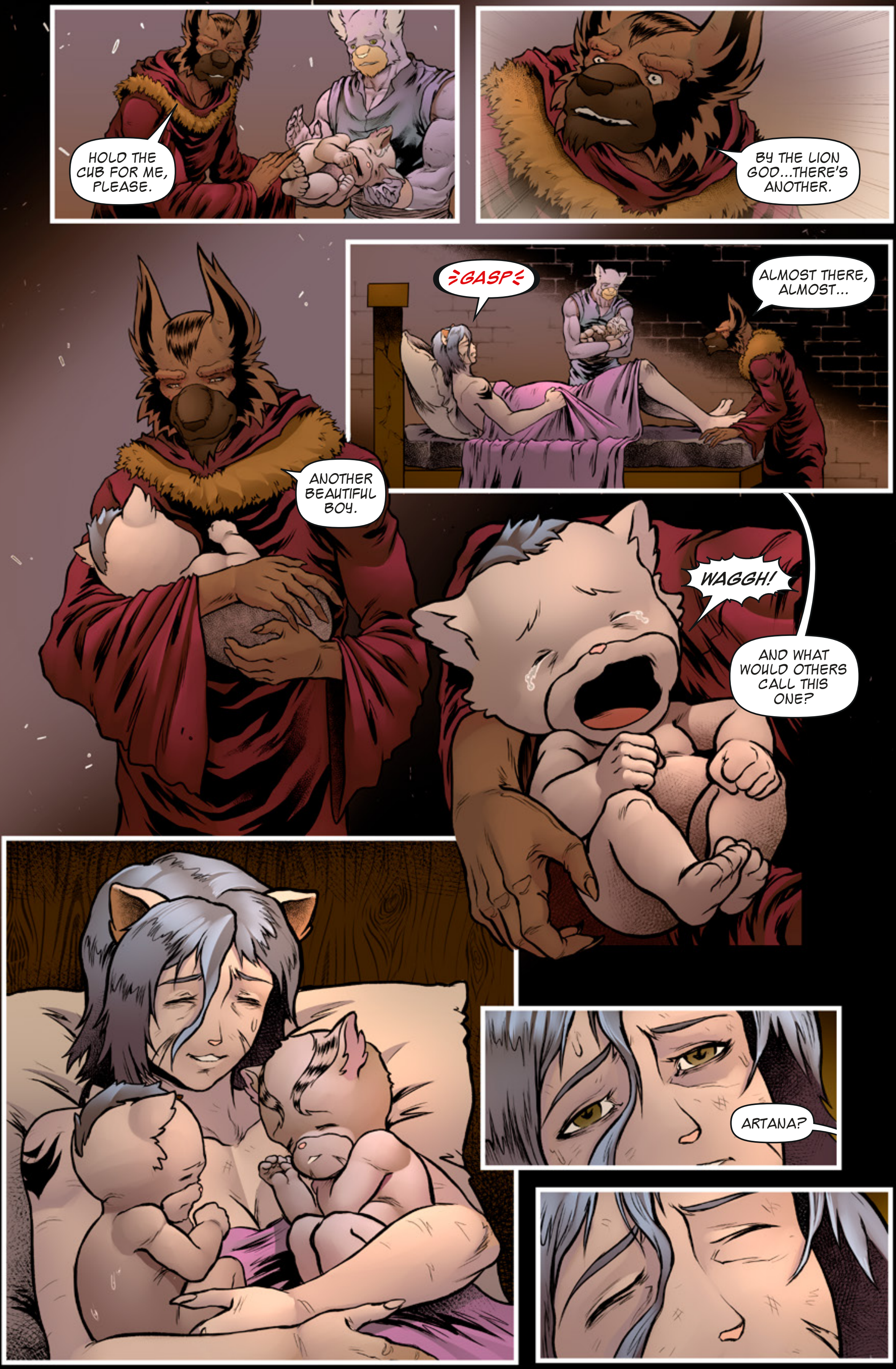

Stormholt City, Stormholt.
WHAT IS SO URGENT THAT IT COULDN'T WAIT?
MY LORD, WE HAVE A PROBLEM...
OUT WITH IT, CAPTAIN.
THE BATTLECATS SNUCK INTO THE ANFIL AND STOLE ERAMAD'S BODY.
WE DID EVERYTHING WE COULD, MY LORD.
PLEASE. STAND.

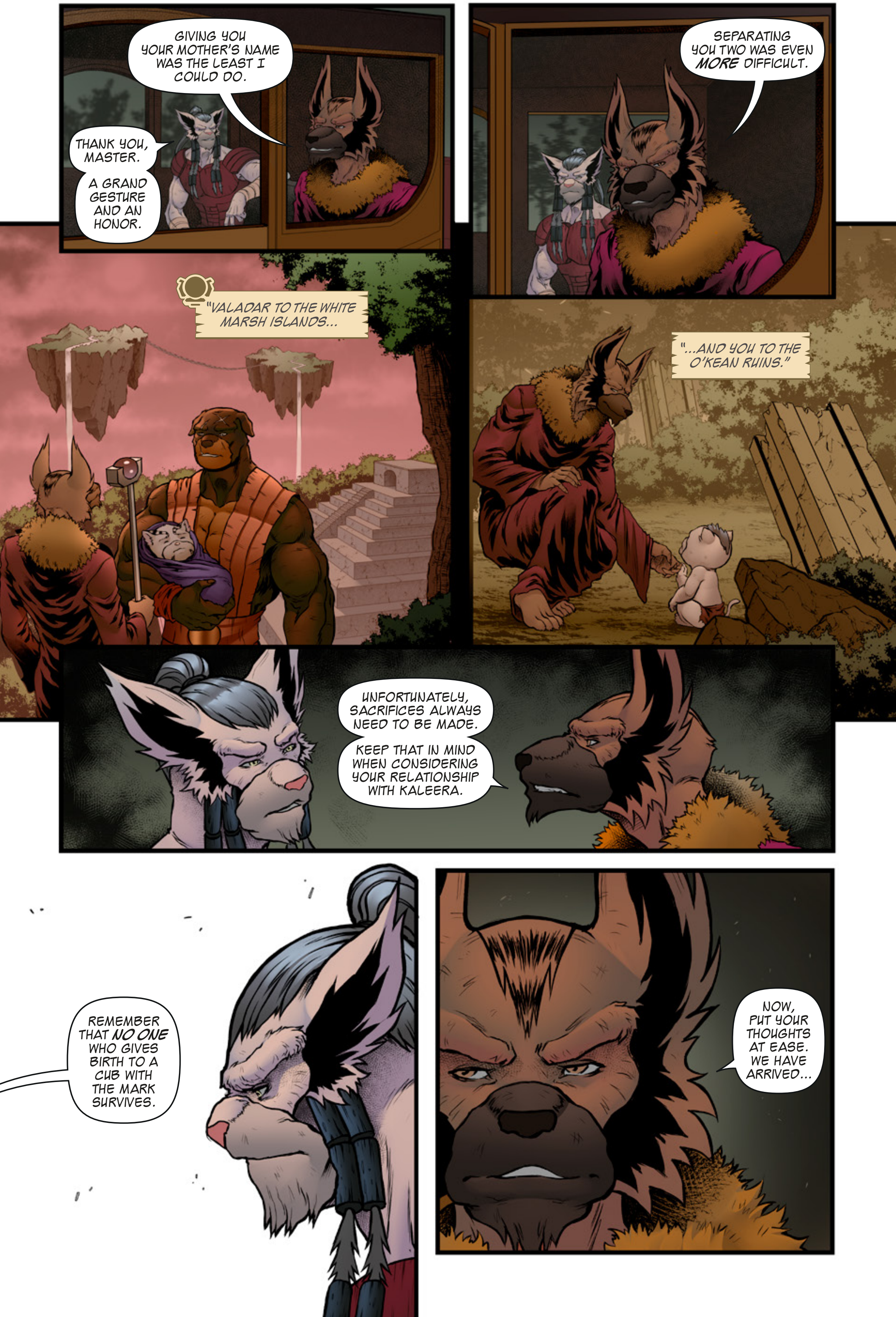

I'VE SEEN THEM FIGHT. I KNOW HOW STRONG THEY ARE.
HOWEVER...
...THIS REFLECTS POORLY ON ME...
SPLRSH
I WILL NOT *TOLERATE* MISTAKES.
SLKT

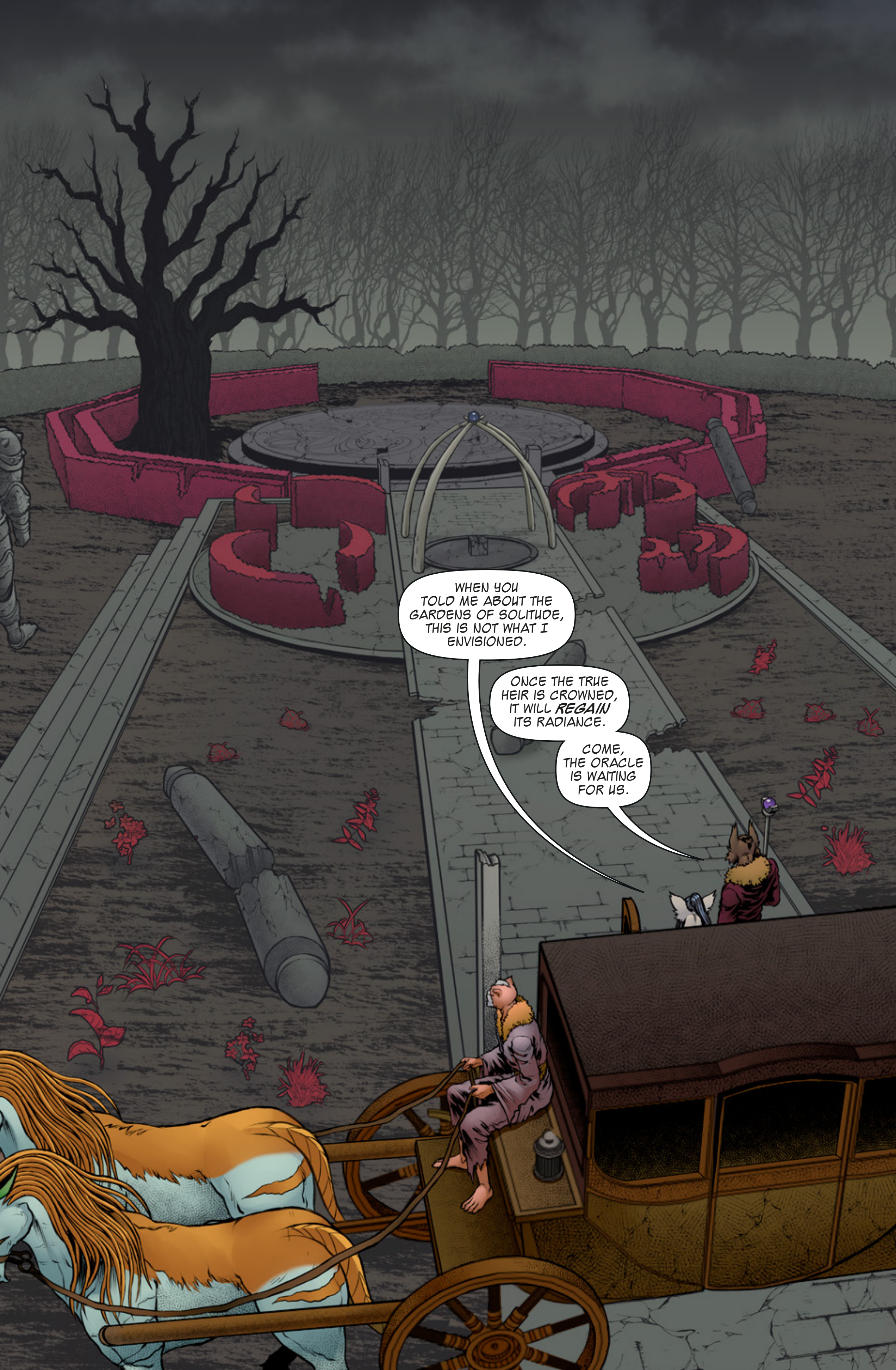

ARTAIN, I WAS HOPING TO USE OUR TIME TOGETHER TO DISCUSS THE REASONS FOR MY ACTIONS.
THERE IS NOTHING TO DISCUSS, MASTER.
YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO DO FOR THE GOOD OF VALDERIA.
IT'S NOT FAIR TO YOU.
YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN ABOUT YOUR BROTHER.
BUT YOU'VE EXPERIENCED THE POWER OF THE MARK OF THE FANG.
YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S CAPABLE OF.
ITS POWER *HAD* TO BE CONCEALED.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR REASONING, MASTER.
IT WAS NOT AN EASY DECISION, YOU KNOW...

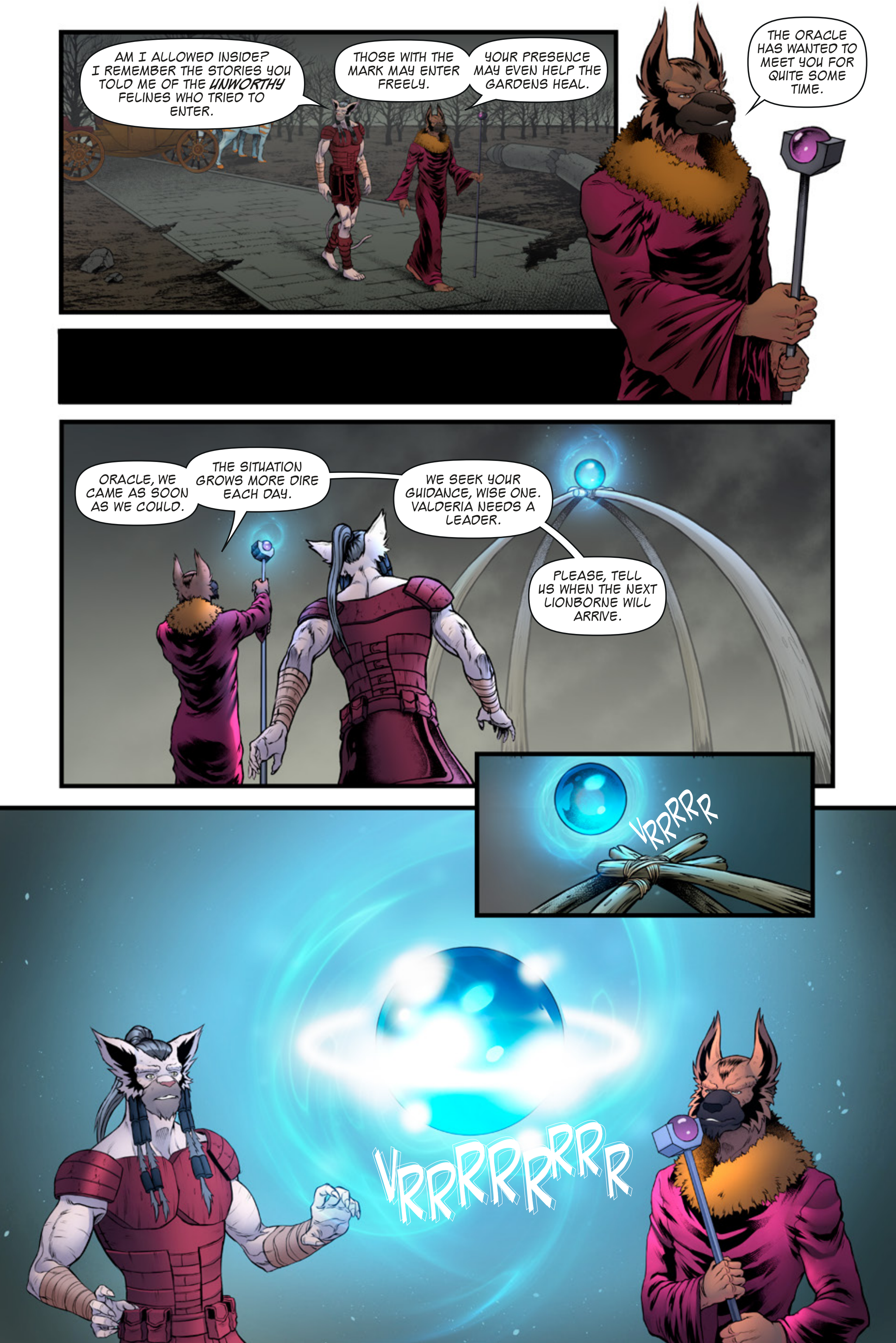

INVERMERE, STORMHOLT
379 C.Y.
"...TAKING YOU BOTH FROM YOUR MOTHER."
AGHH!
BY ZAPHYRA! YOU CAME!
HOW LONG HAS SHE BEEN LIKE THIS?
A FEW DAYS.
THE FATHER?
HE DIED DURING RORINHAL.
I HOPE IT WAS ALL RIGHT FOR ME TO SUMMON YOU...
THE MARK APPEARED RIGHT AFTER SHE WENT INTO LABOR.
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING.
WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
ARTANA.
YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL NAME.

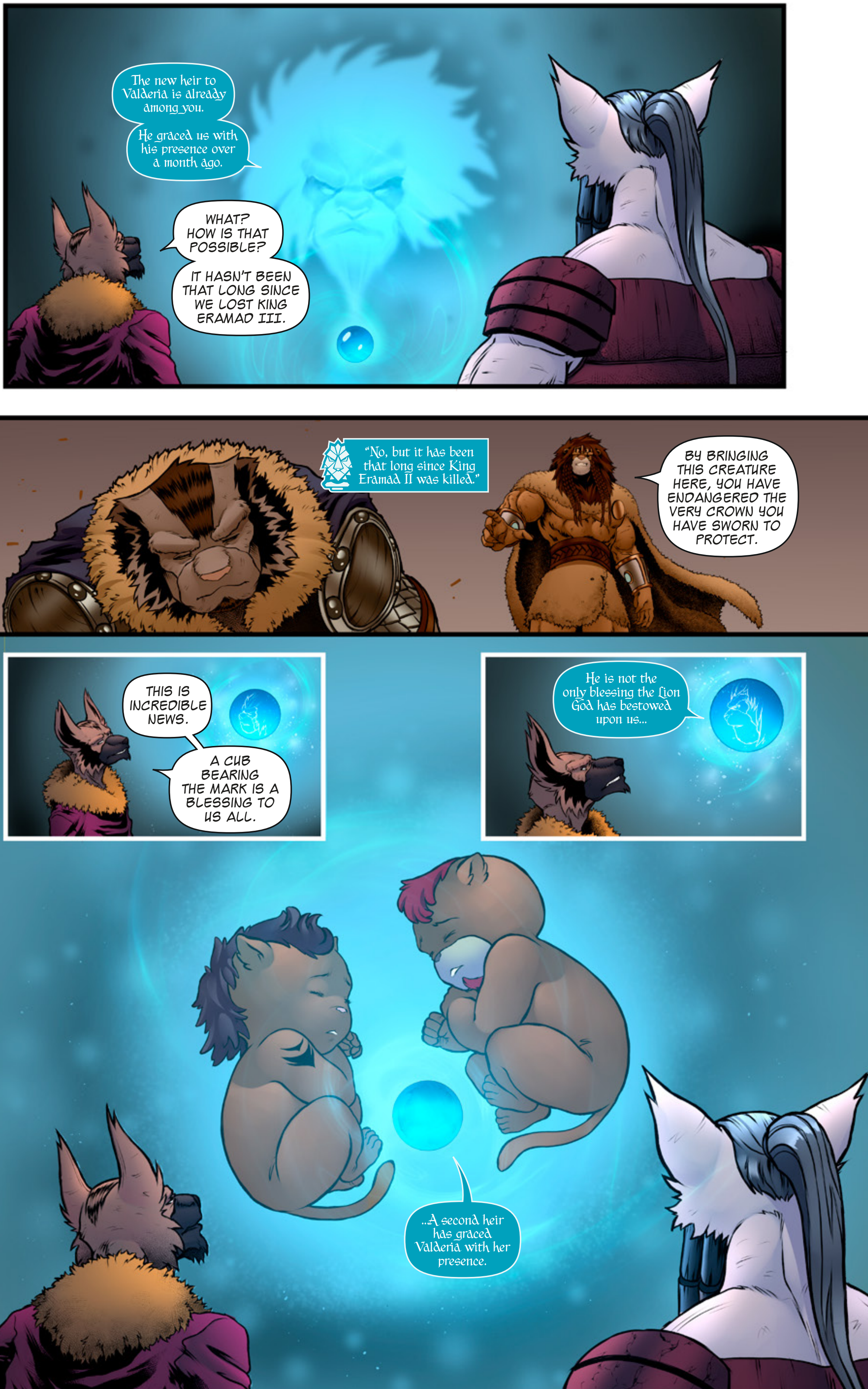

THIS WILL BE OVER SOON, ARTANA.
AAAHGGH!
HUFF
HUFF
WAAAGGH!
ARTANA, HE IS PERFECT.
HAVE YOU CHOSEN WHAT OTHERS WILL CALL HIM?
WAAAGGH!
WAAAGGH!
VALADAR. HIS NAME IS VALADAR.
VALDERIA IS GOING TO BE VERY PROUD OF YOU, YOUNG VALA--
AHHHHH!


HOLD THE CUB FOR ME, PLEASE.
BY THE LION GOD...THERE'S ANOTHER.
ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL BOY.
GASP
ALMOST THERE, ALMOST...
WAGGH!
AND WHAT WOULD OTHERS CALL THIS ONE?
ARTANA?


GIVING YOU YOUR MOTHER'S NAME WAS THE LEAST I COULD DO.
THANK YOU, MASTER.
A GRAND GESTURE AND AN HONOR.
SEPARATING YOU TWO WAS EVEN *MORE* DIFFICULT.
"VALADAR TO THE WHITE MARSH ISLANDS...
"...AND YOU TO THE O'KEAN RUINS."
UNFORTUNATELY, SACRIFICES ALWAYS NEED TO BE MADE.
KEEP THAT IN MIND WHEN CONSIDERING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH KALEERA.
REMEMBER THAT *NO ONE* WHO GIVES BIRTH TO A CUB WITH THE MARK SURVIVES.
NOW, PUT YOUR THOUGHTS AT EASE. WE HAVE ARRIVED...


WHEN YOU TOLD ME ABOUT THE GARDENS OF SOLITUDE, THIS IS NOT WHAT I ENVISIONED.
ONCE THE TRUE HEIR IS CROWNED, IT WILL ***REGAIN*** ITS RADIANCE.
COME, THE ORACLE IS WAITING FOR US.


AM I ALLOWED INSIDE? I REMEMBER THE STORIES YOU TOLD ME OF THE *UNWORTHY* FELINES WHO TRIED TO ENTER.
THOSE WITH THE MARK MAY ENTER FREELY.
YOUR PRESENCE MAY EVEN HELP THE GARDENS HEAL.
THE ORACLE HAS WANTED TO MEET YOU FOR QUITE SOME TIME.
ORACLE, WE CAME AS SOON AS WE COULD.
THE SITUATION GROWS MORE DIRE EACH DAY.
WE SEEK YOUR GUIDANCE, WISE ONE. VALDERIA NEEDS A LEADER.
PLEASE, TELL US WHEN THE NEXT LIONBORNE WILL ARRIVE.
VRRRRR
VRRRRRRRRR

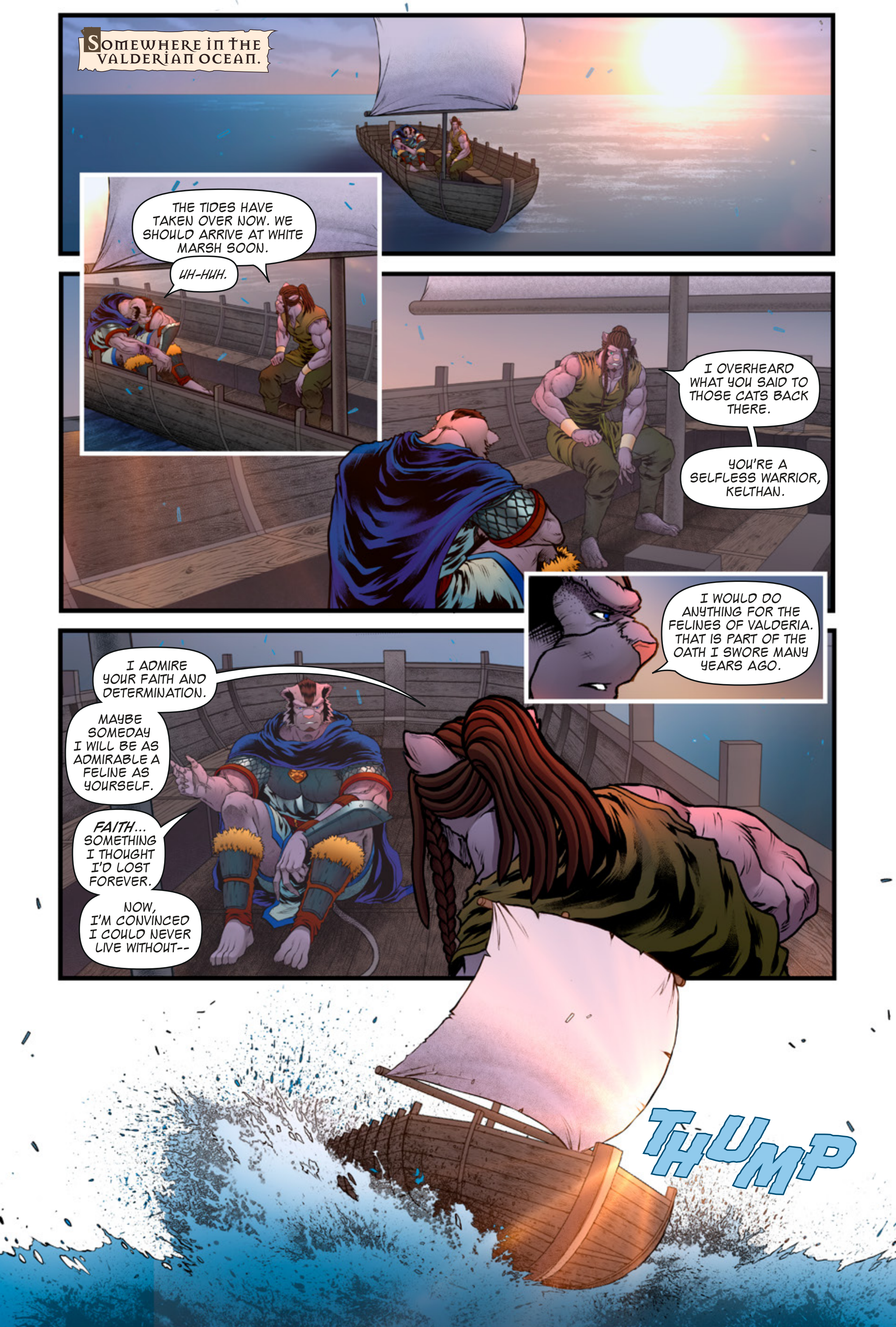

The new heir to Valderia is already among you.
He graced us with his presence over a month ago.
WHAT? HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
IT HASN'T BEEN THAT LONG SINCE WE LOST KING ERAMAD III.
"No, but it has been that long since King Eramad II was killed."
BY BRINGING THIS CREATURE HERE, YOU HAVE ENDANGERED THE VERY CROWN YOU HAVE SWORN TO PROTECT.
THIS IS INCREDIBLE NEWS.
A CUB BEARING THE MARK IS A BLESSING TO US ALL.
He is not the only blessing the Lion God has bestowed upon us...
...A second heir has graced Valderia with her presence.

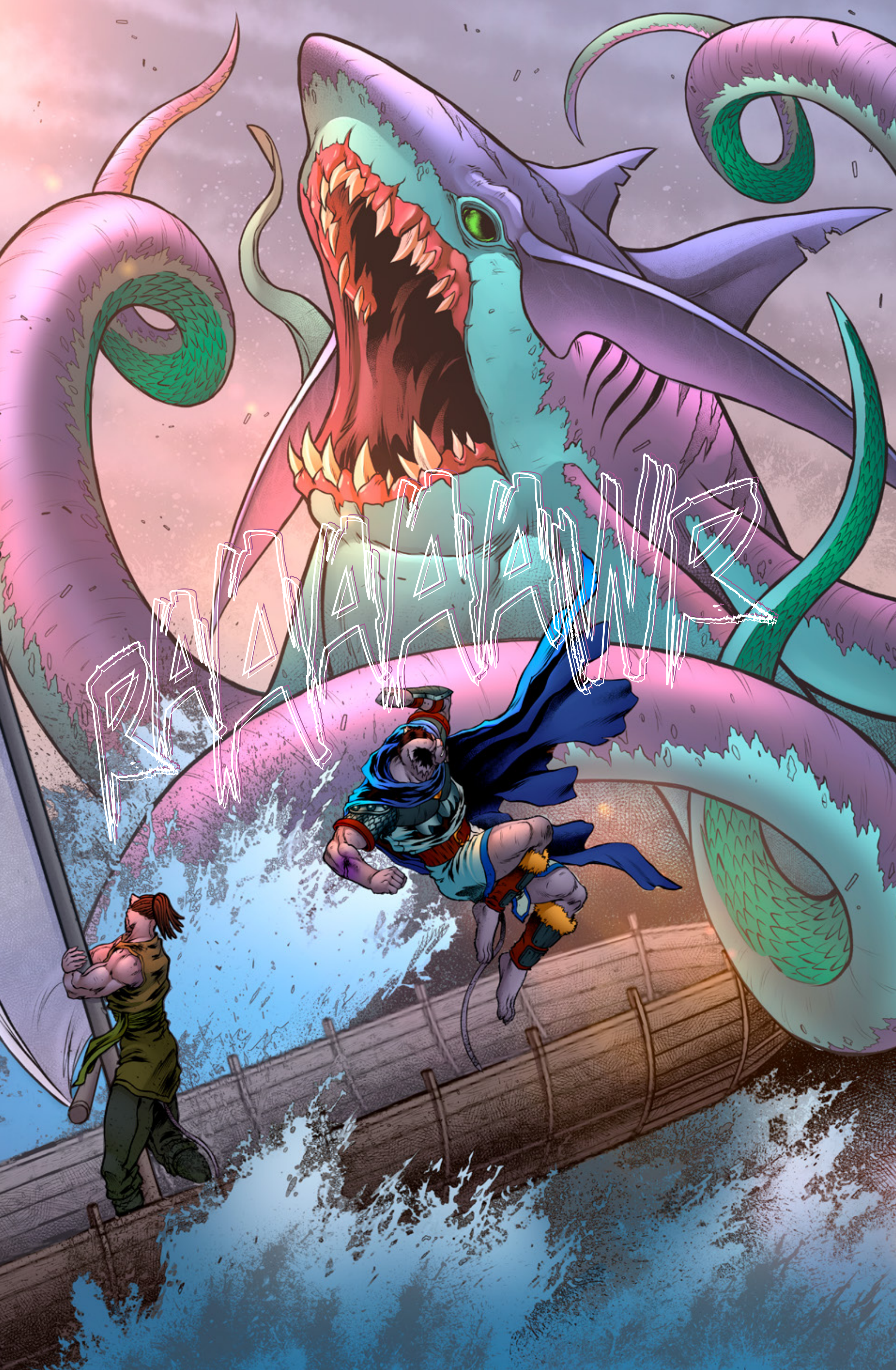
WELCOME HOME

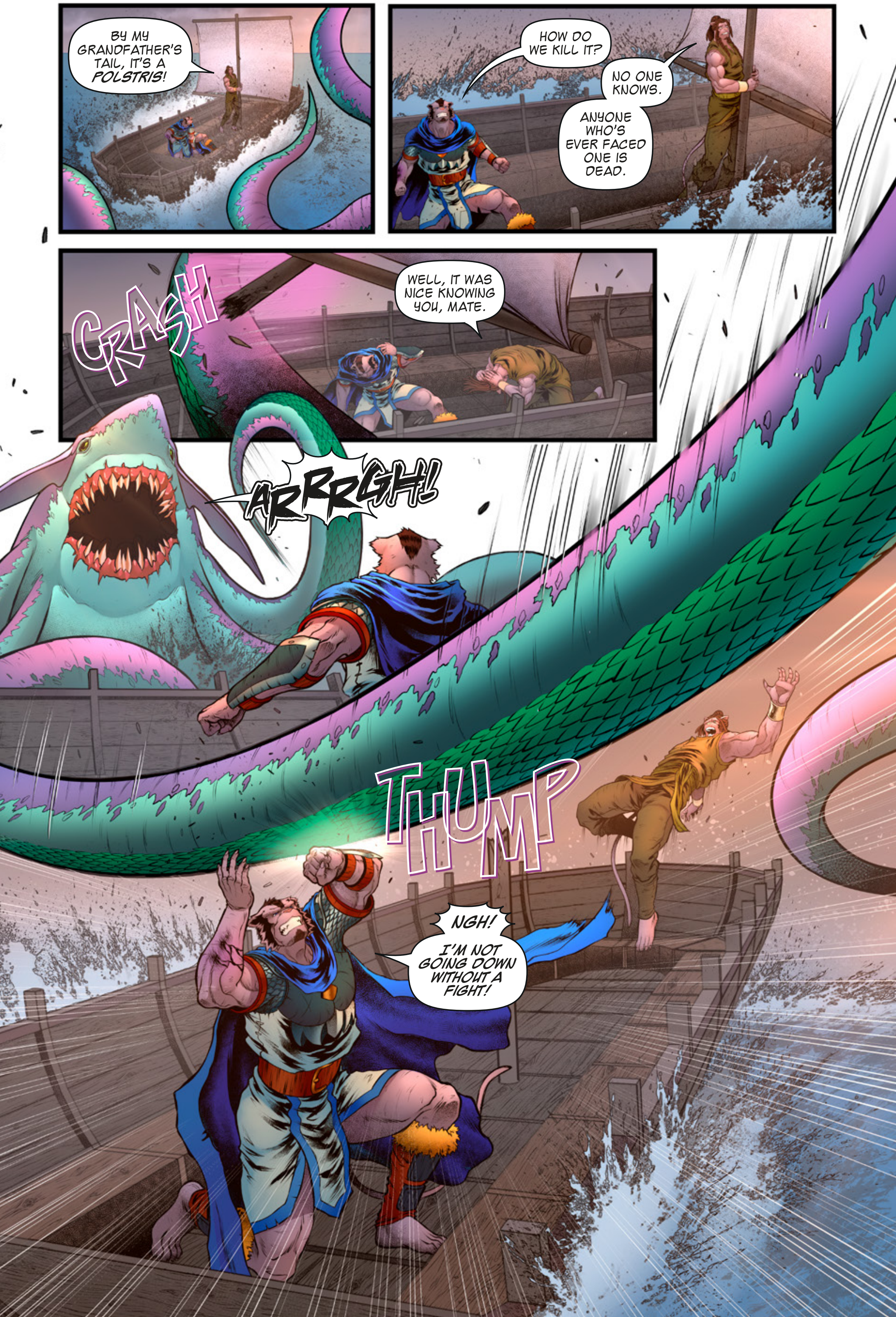
3

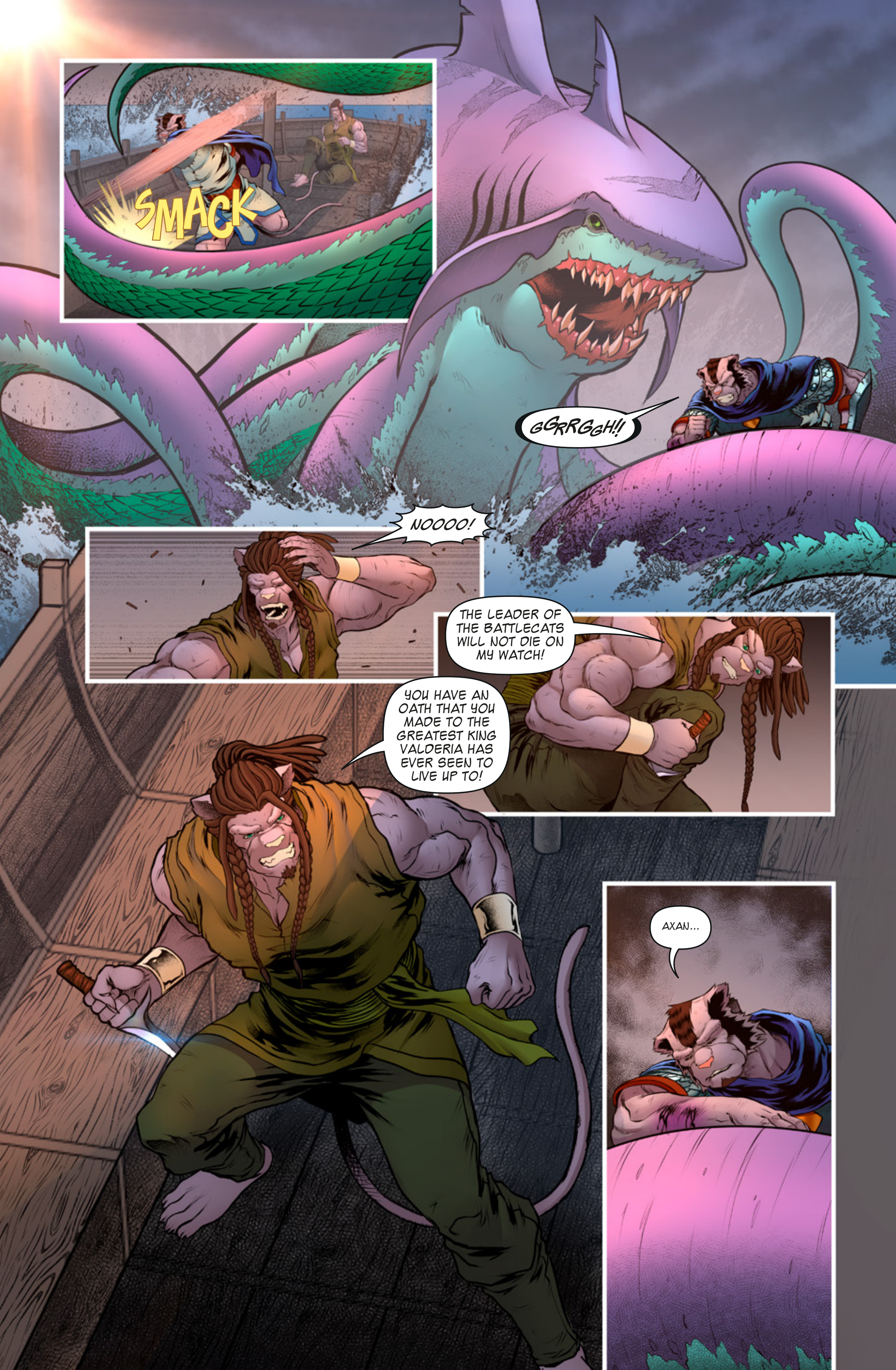
Chapter Three

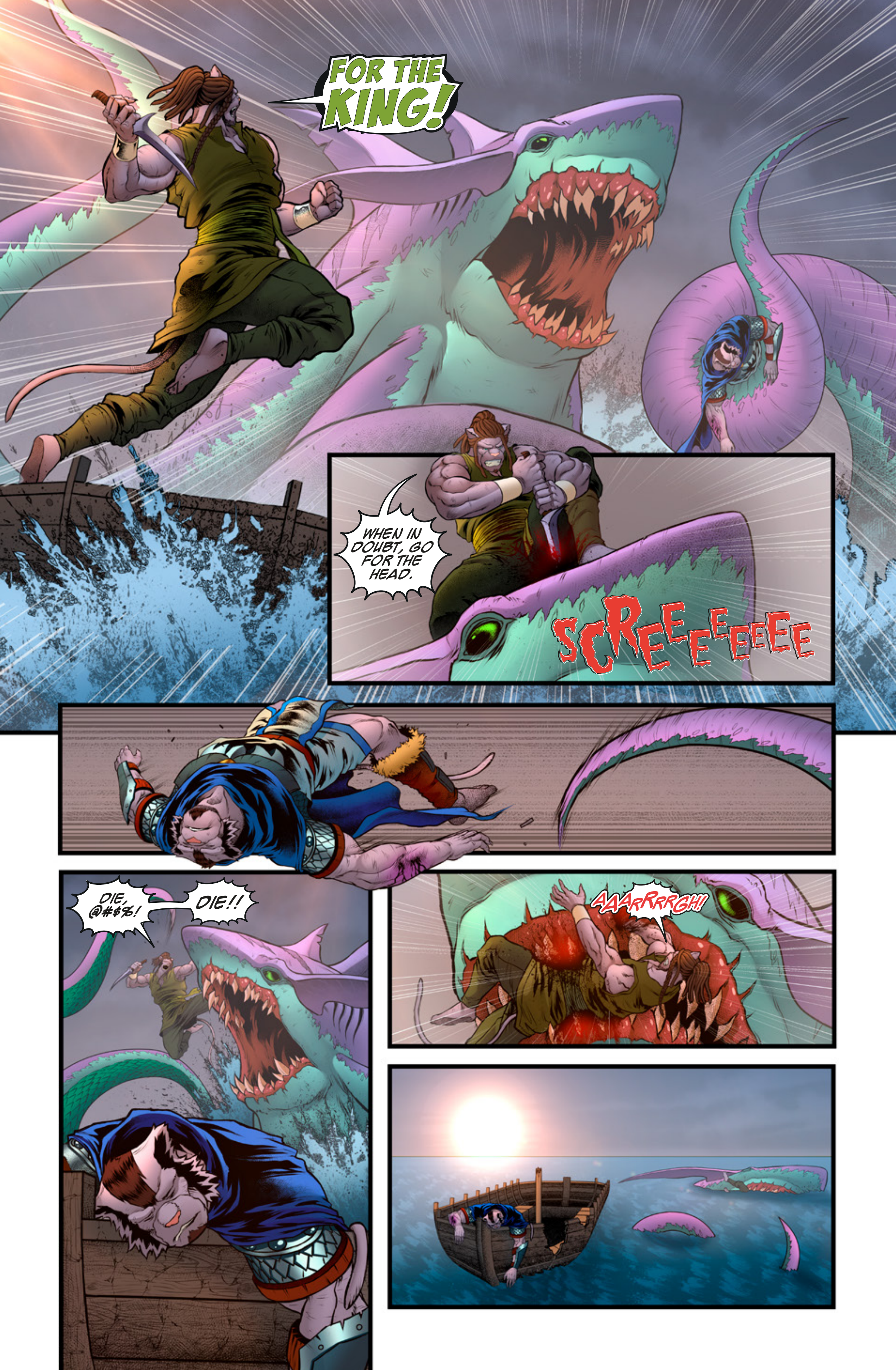
BATTLECATS®

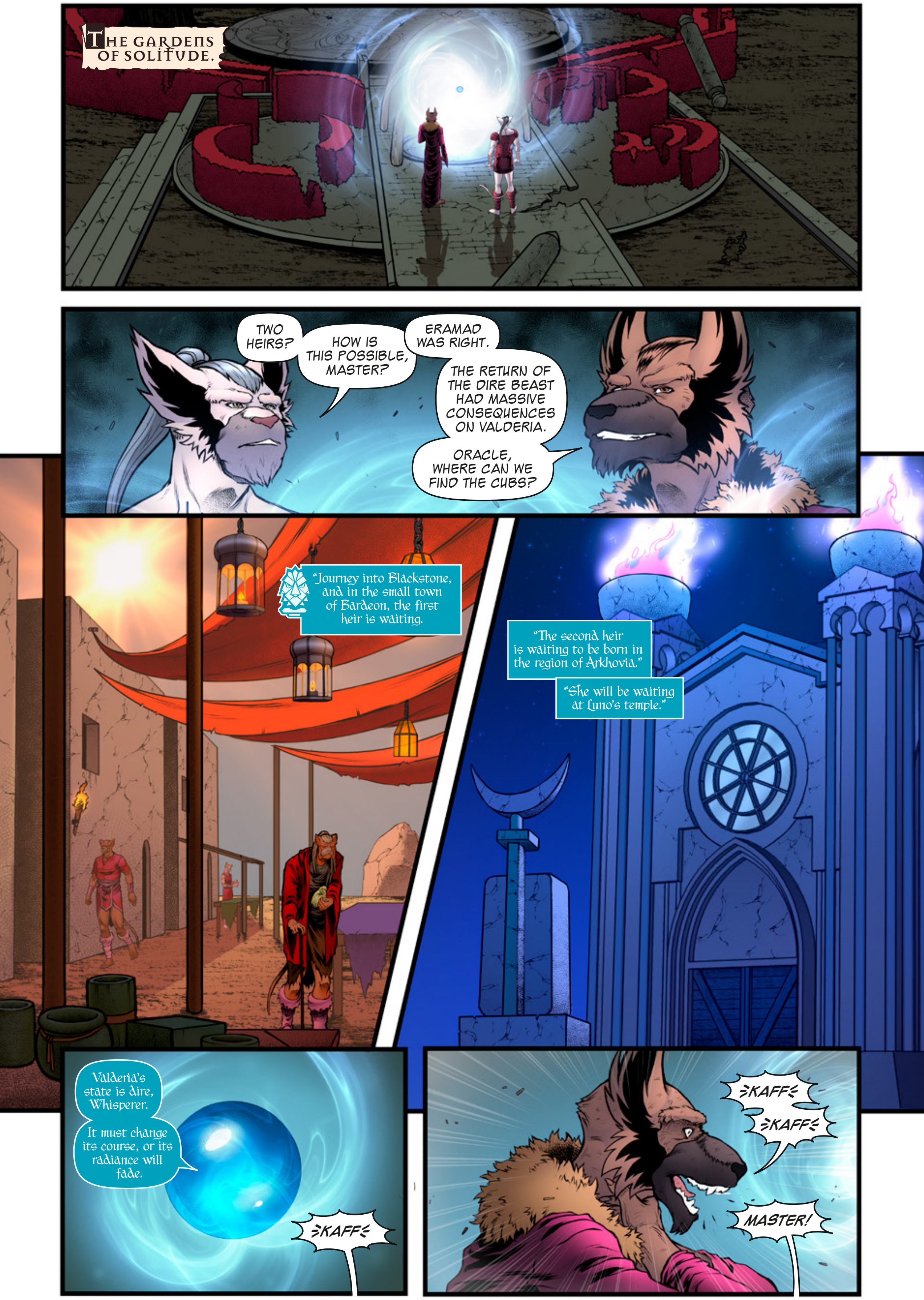

SOMEWHERE IN THE VALDERIAN OCEAN.
THE TIDES HAVE TAKEN OVER NOW. WE SHOULD ARRIVE AT WHITE MARSH SOON.
UH-HUH.
I OVERHEARD WHAT YOU SAID TO THOSE CATS BACK THERE.
YOU'RE A SELFLESS WARRIOR, KELTHAN.
I WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR THE FELINES OF VALDERIA. THAT IS PART OF THE OATH I SWORE MANY YEARS AGO.
I ADMIRE YOUR FAITH AND DETERMINATION.
MAYBE SOMEDAY I WILL BE AS ADMIRABLE A FELINE AS YOURSELF.
FAITH... SOMETHING I THOUGHT I'D LOST FOREVER.
NOW, I'M CONVINCED I COULD NEVER LIVE WITHOUT--
THUMP

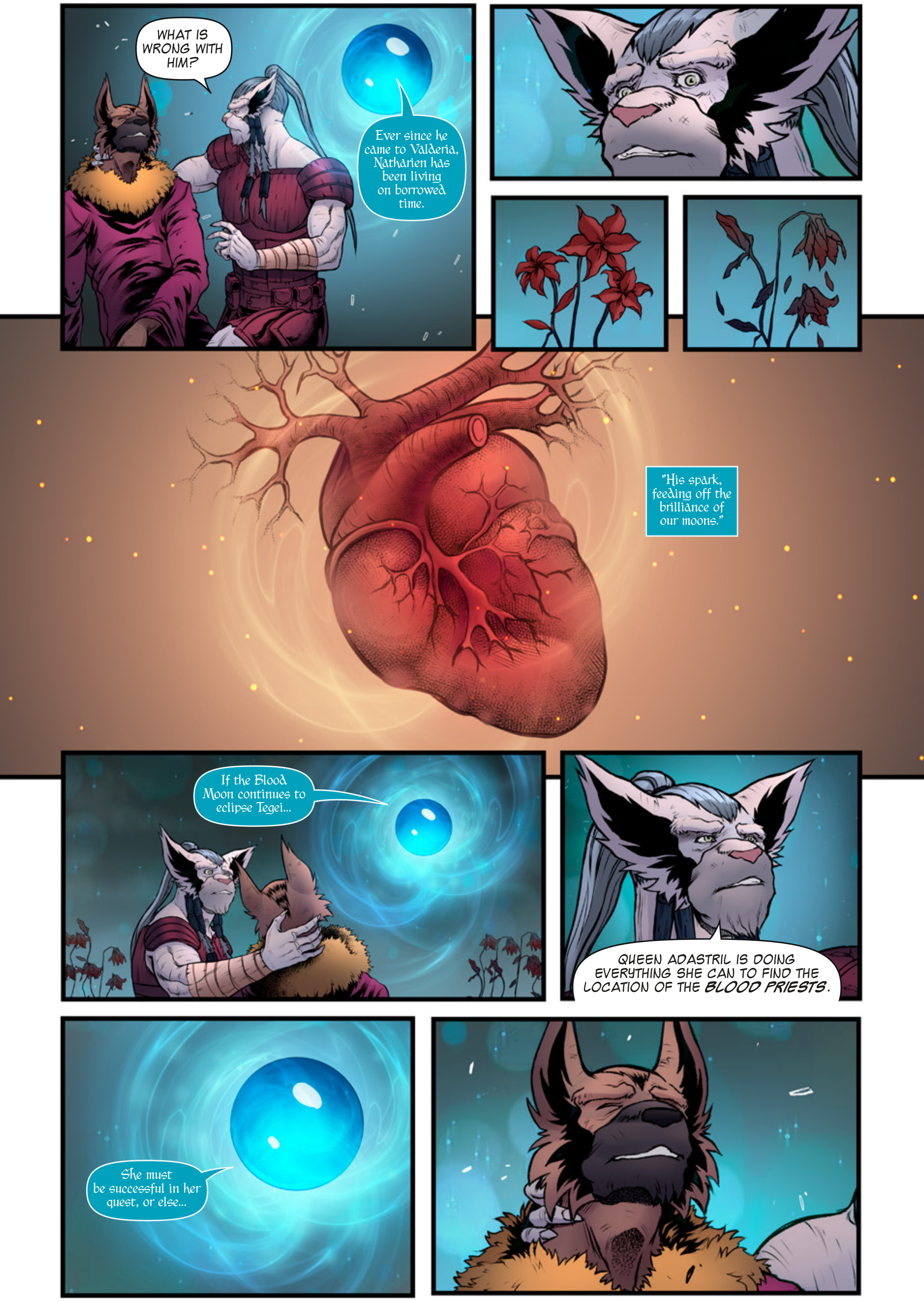

RAAAAAWR

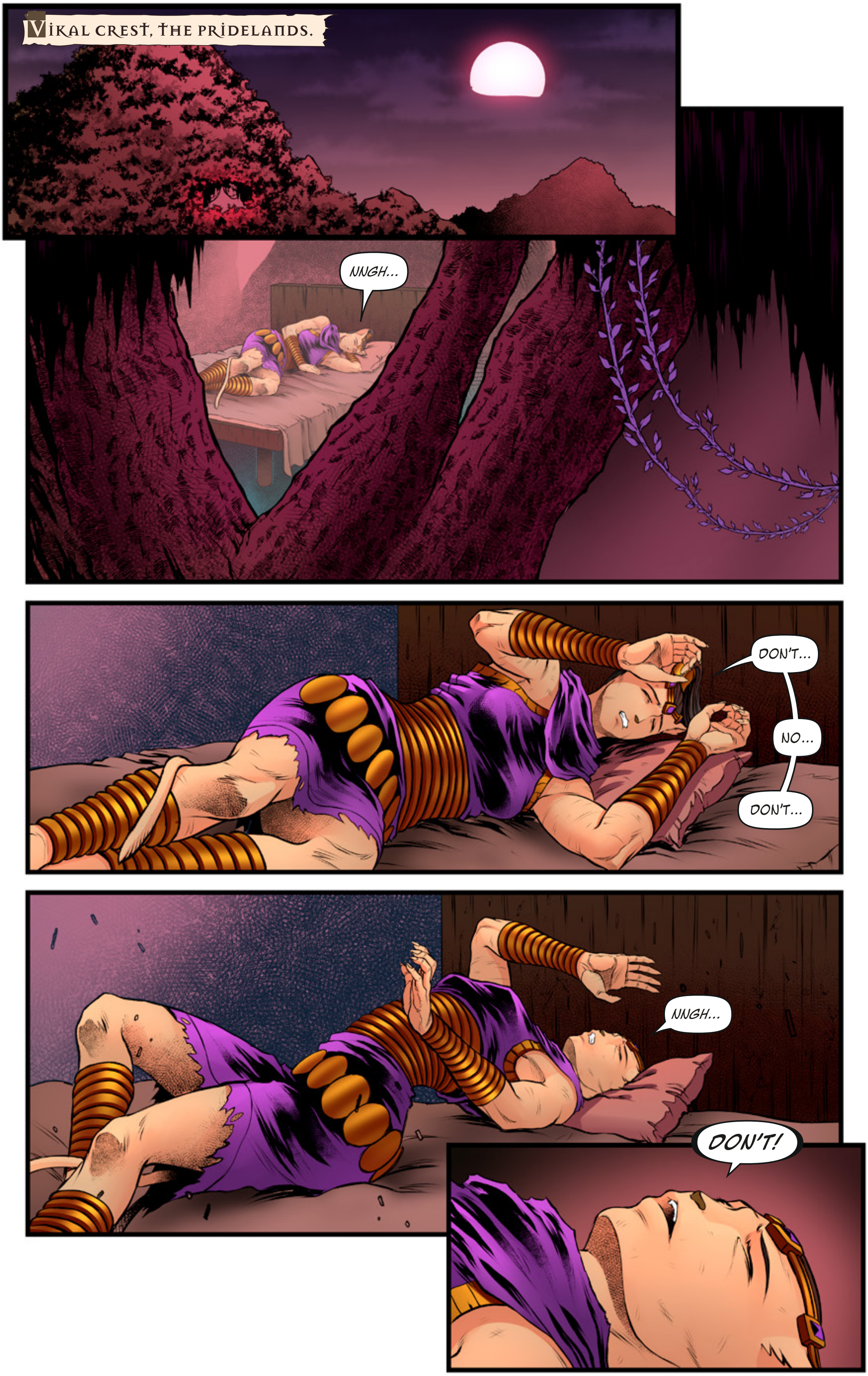

BY MY GRANDFATHER'S TAIL, IT'S A *POLSTRIS!*
HOW DO WE KILL IT?
NO ONE KNOWS.
ANYONE WHO'S EVER FACED ONE IS DEAD.
CRASH
WELL, IT WAS NICE KNOWING YOU, MATE.
ARRRGH!
THUMP
NGH!
I'M NOT GOING DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT!

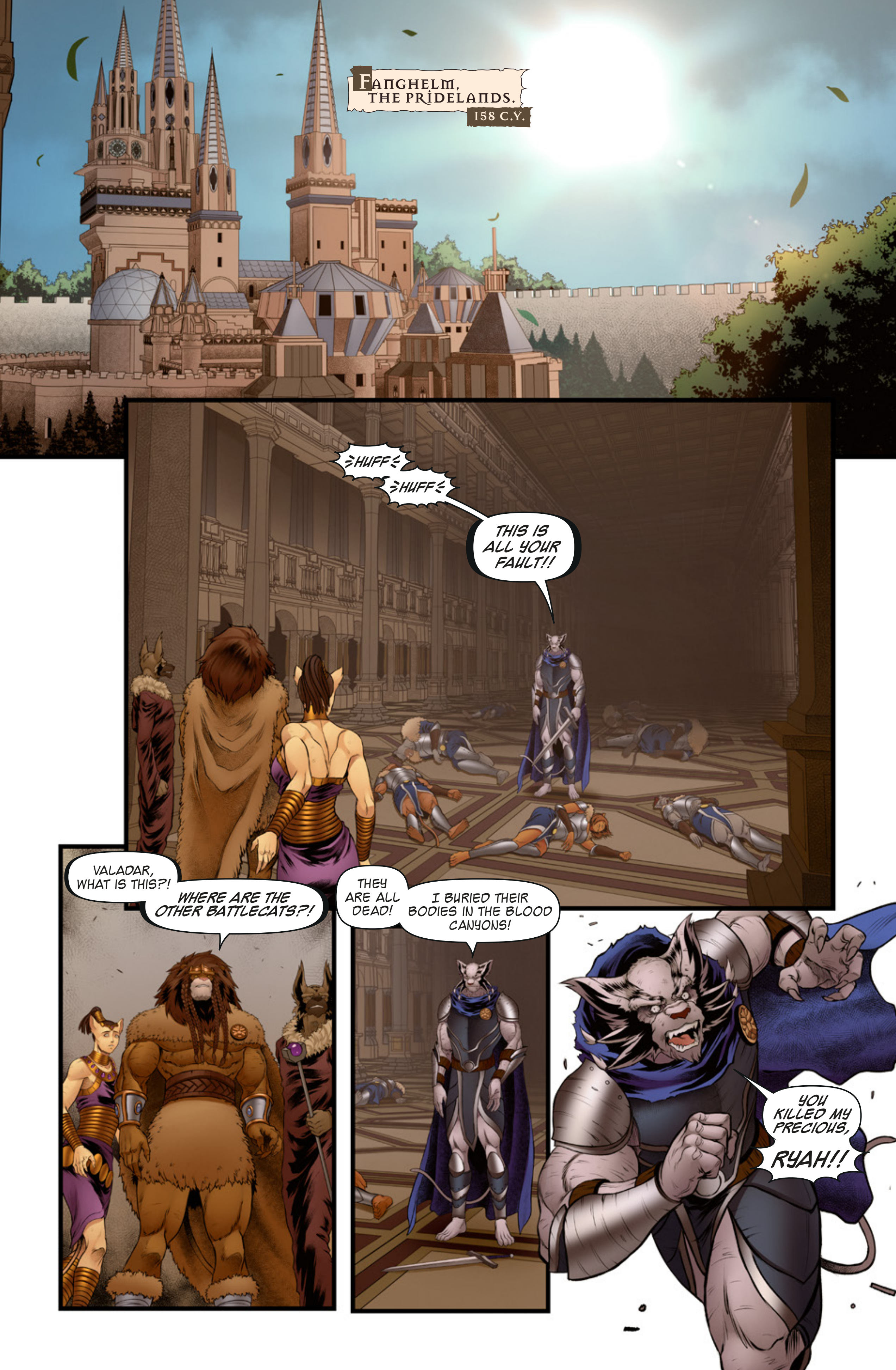

SMACK
GGRRGGH!!
NOOOO!
THE LEADER OF THE BATTLECATS WILL NOT DIE ON MY WATCH!
YOU HAVE AN OATH THAT YOU MADE TO THE GREATEST KING VALDERIA HAS EVER SEEN TO LIVE UP TO!
AXAN...

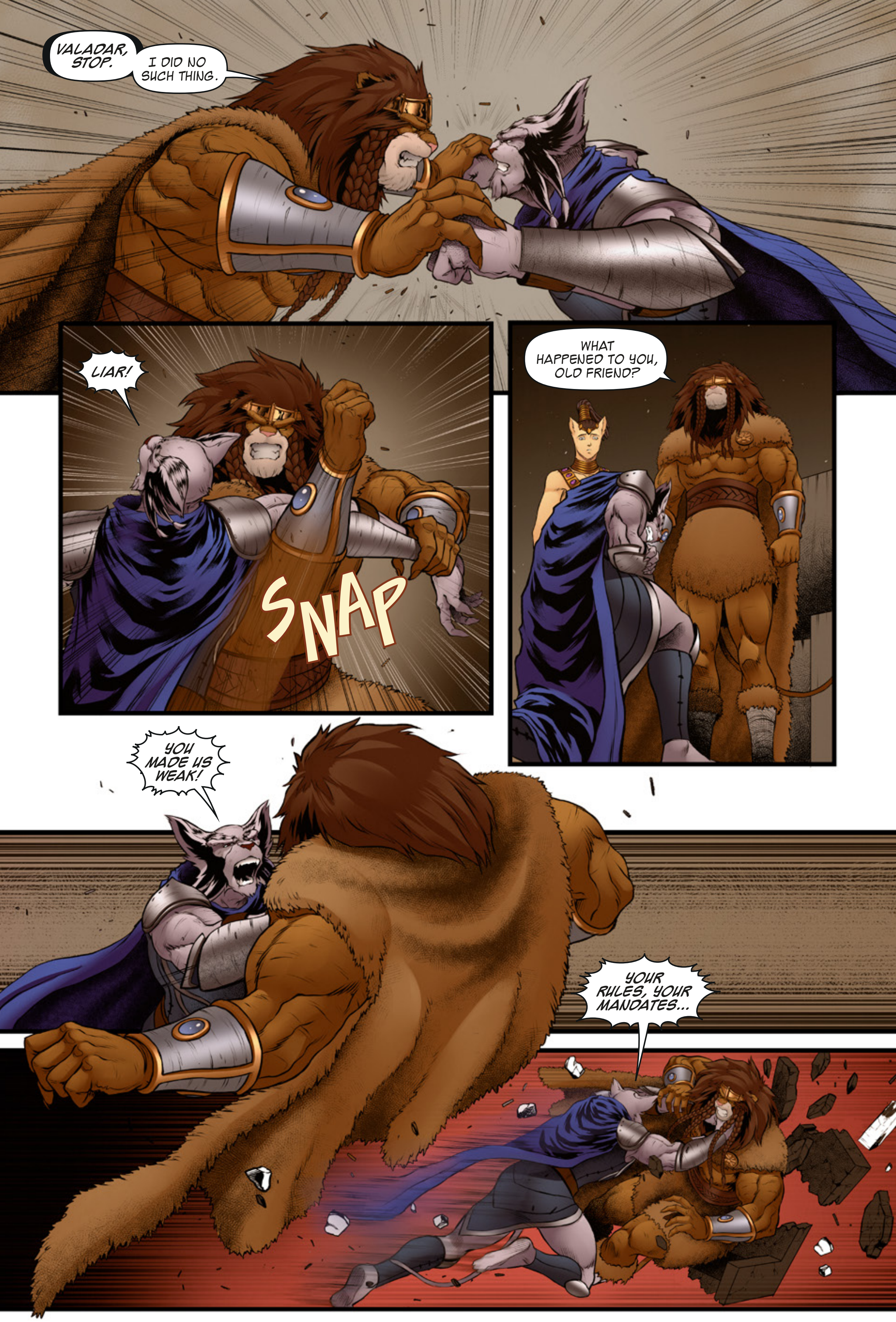

FOR THE KING!
WHEN IN DOUBT, GO FOR THE HEAD.
SCREEEEEEEE
DIE, @#$%!
DIE!!
AAARRRRGH!

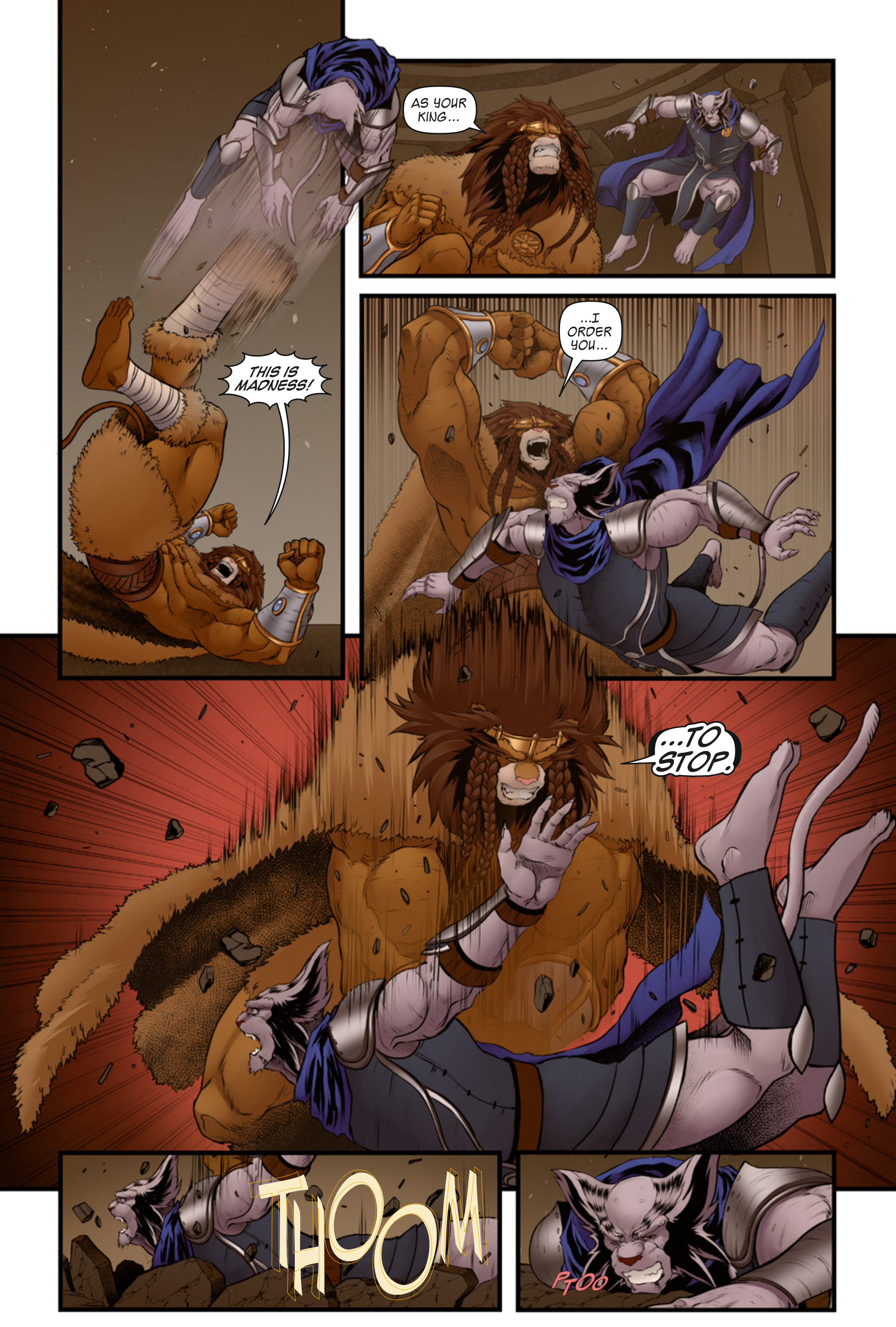

THE GARDENS OF SOLITUDE.
TWO HEIRS?
HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE, MASTER?
ERAMAD WAS RIGHT.
THE RETURN OF THE DIRE BEAST HAD MASSIVE CONSEQUENCES ON VALDERIA.
ORACLE, WHERE CAN WE FIND THE CUBS?
"Journey into Blackstone, and in the small town of Bardeon, the first heir is waiting.
"The second heir is waiting to be born in the region of Arkhovia."
"She will be waiting at Luno's temple."
Valderia's state is dire, Whisperer.
It must change its course, or its radiance will fade.
KAFF
KAFF
KAFF
MASTER!

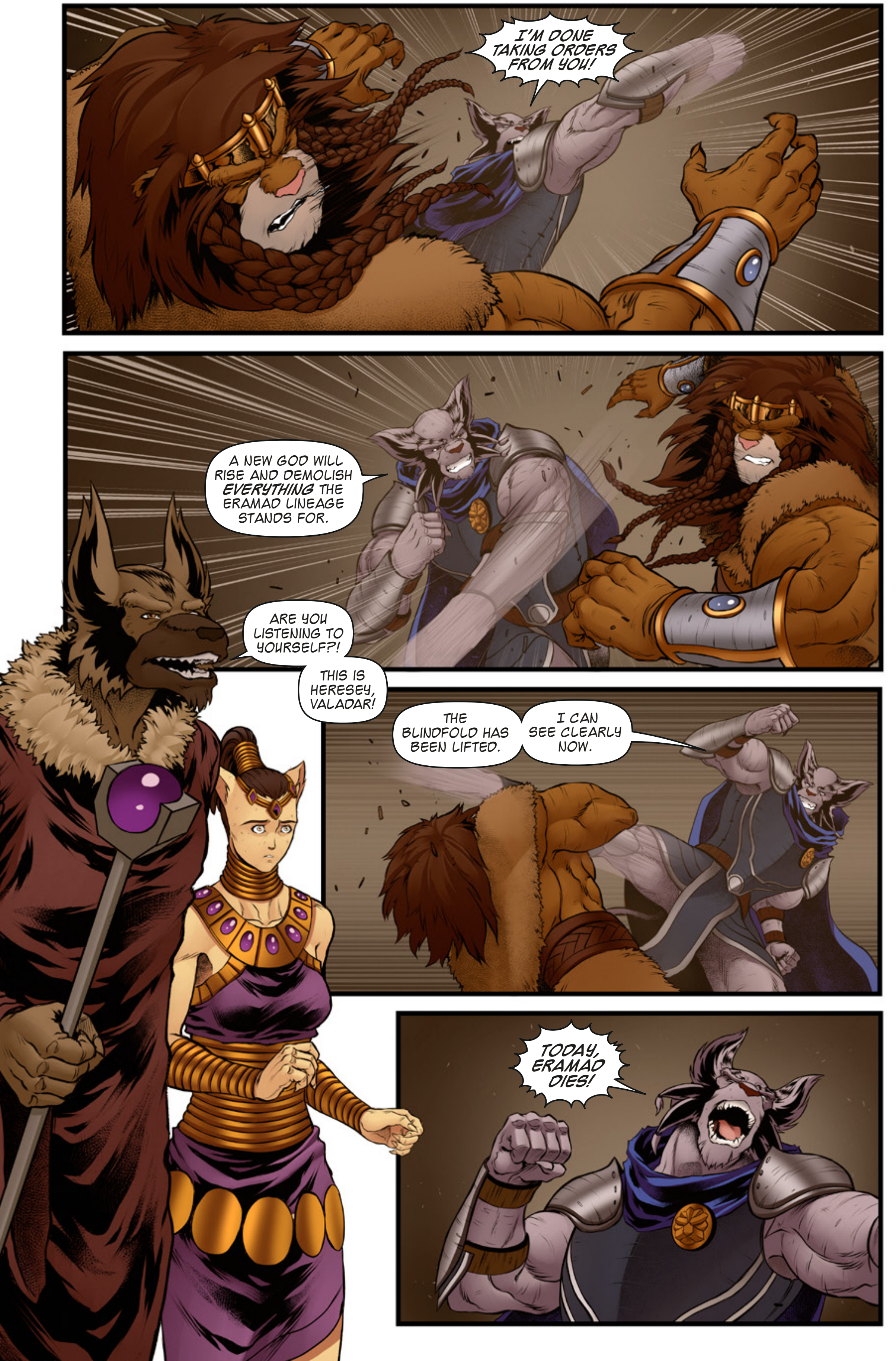

WHAT IS WRONG WITH HIM?
Ever since he came to Valderia, Natharien has been living on borrowed time.
"His spark, feeding off the brilliance of our moons."
If the Blood Moon continues to eclipse Tegei...
QUEEN ADASTRIL IS DOING EVERYTHING SHE CAN TO FIND THE LOCATION OF THE *BLOOD PRIESTS*.
She must be successful in her quest, or else...

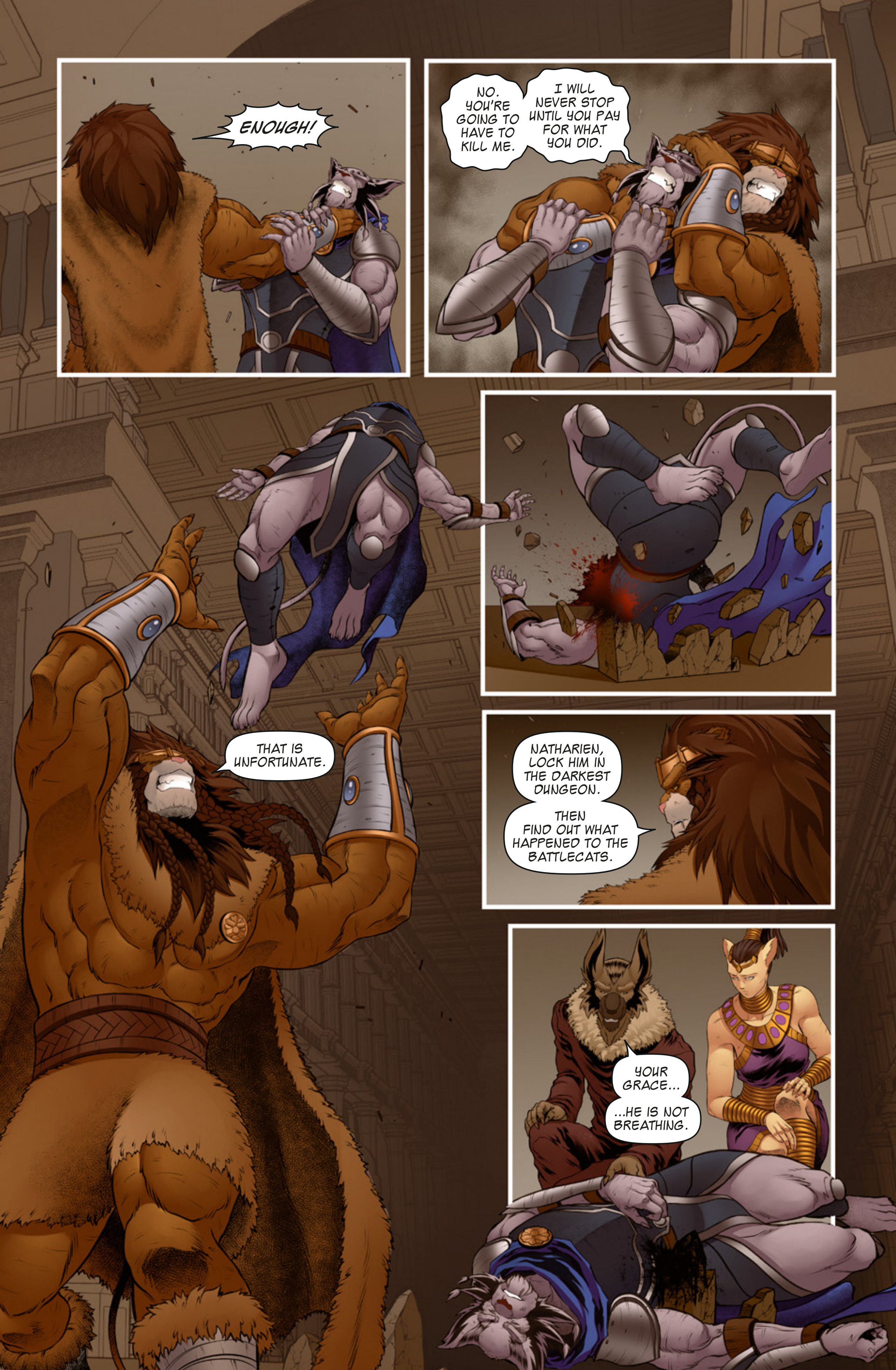

VIKAL CREST, THE PRIDELANDS.
NNGH...
DON'T...
NO...
DON'T...
NNGH...
DON'T!

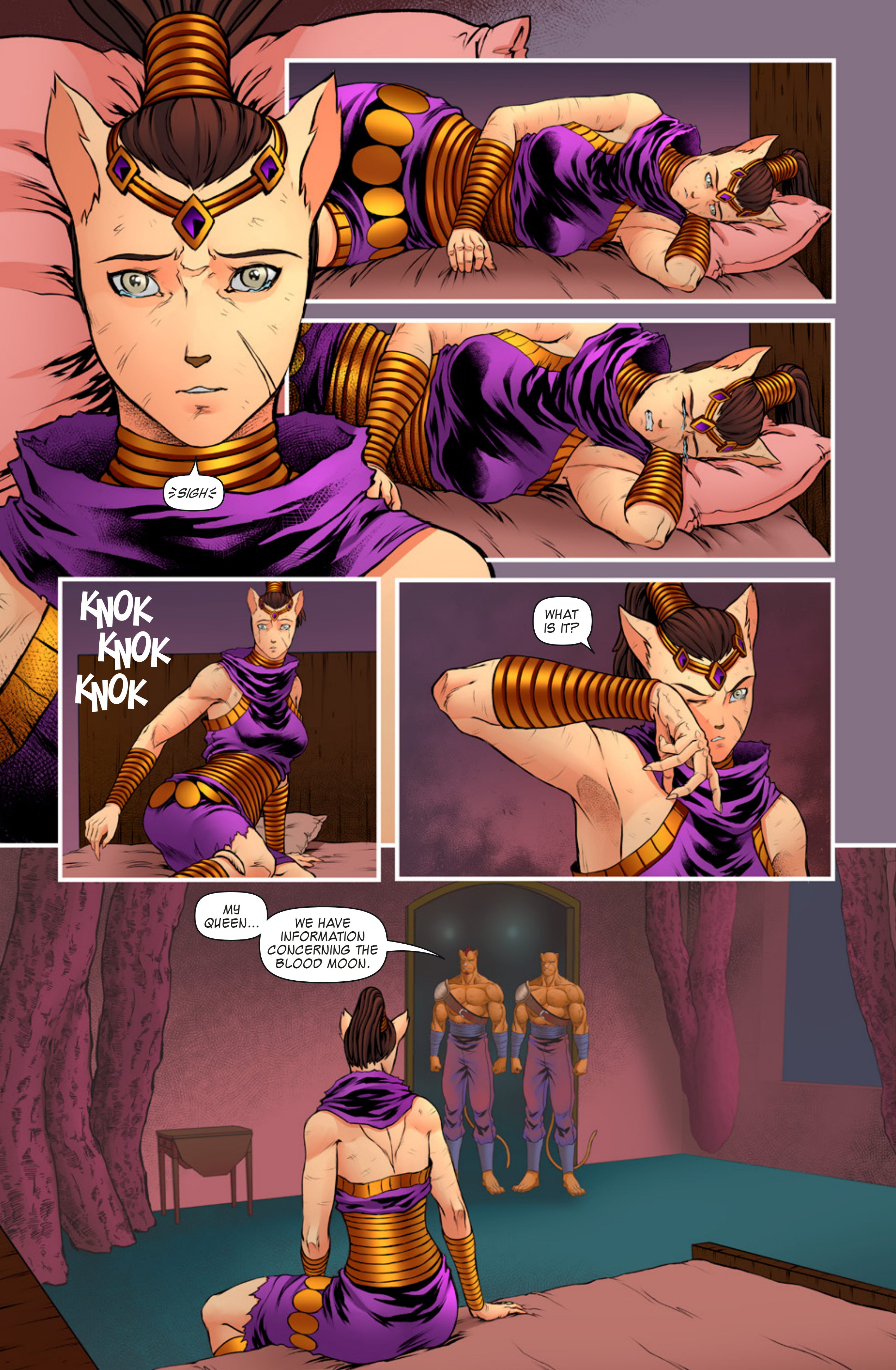

FANGHELM, THE PRIDELANDS.
158 C.Y.
≶HUFF≶
≶HUFF≶
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!!
VALADAR, WHAT IS THIS?!
WHERE ARE THE OTHER BATTLECATS?!
THEY ARE ALL DEAD!
I BURIED THEIR BODIES IN THE BLOOD CANYONS!
YOU KILLED MY PRECIOUS,
RYAH!!

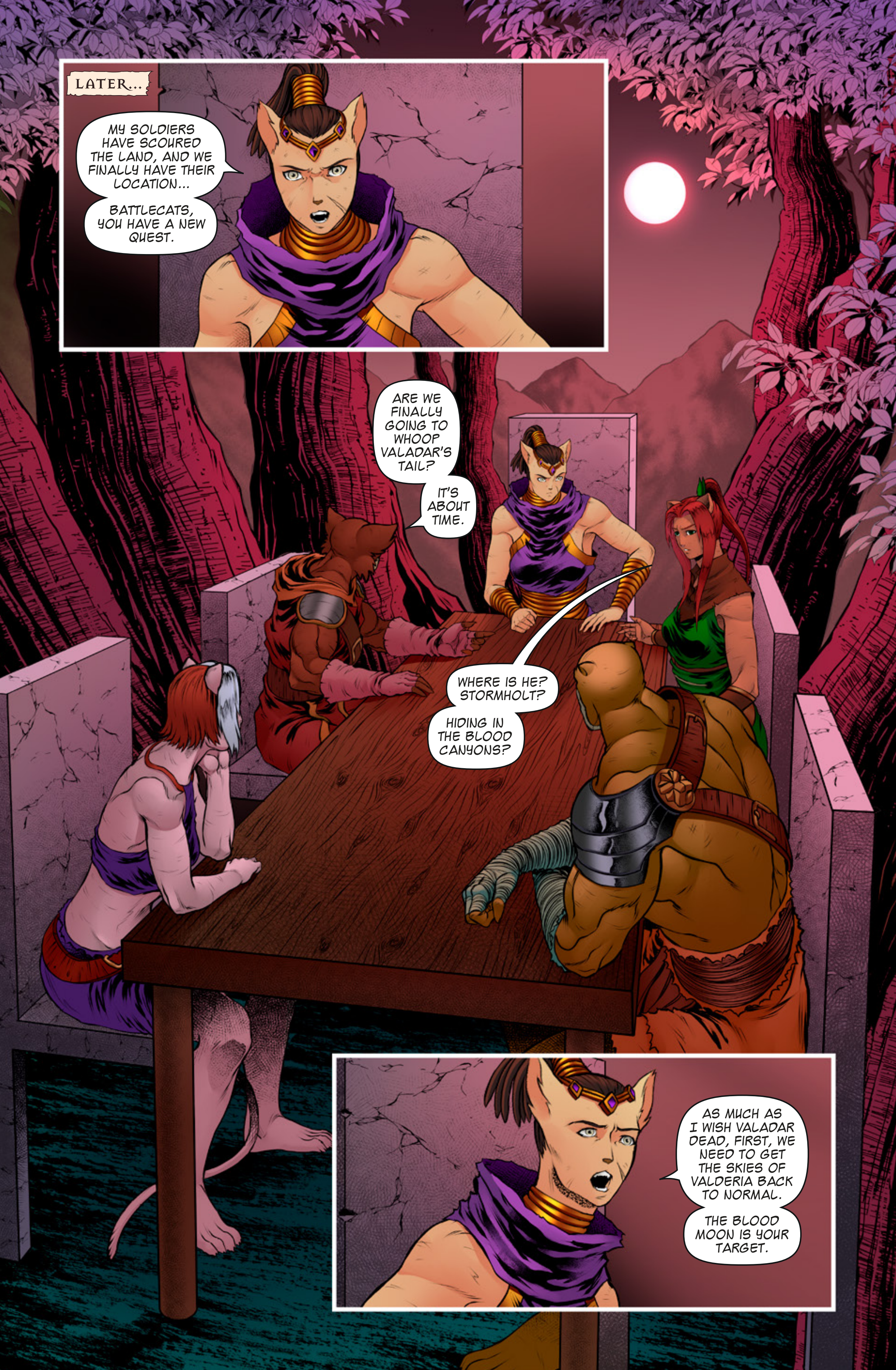

VALADAR, STOP.
I DID NO SUCH THING.
LIAR!
SNAP
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, OLD FRIEND?
YOU MADE US WEAK!
YOUR RULES, YOUR MANDATES...

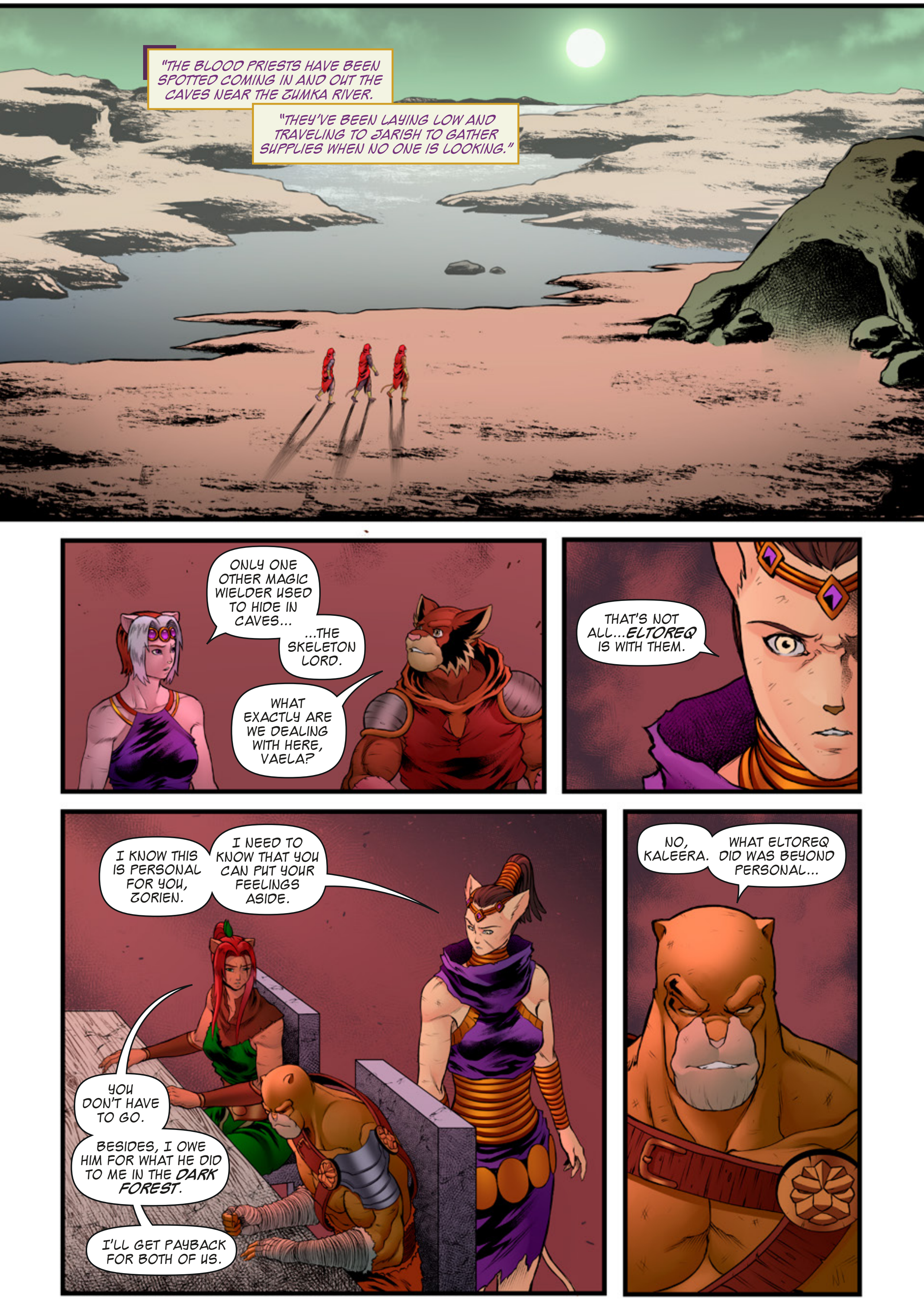

THIS IS MADNESS!
AS YOUR KING...
...I ORDER YOU...
...TO STOP.
THOOM
PTOO

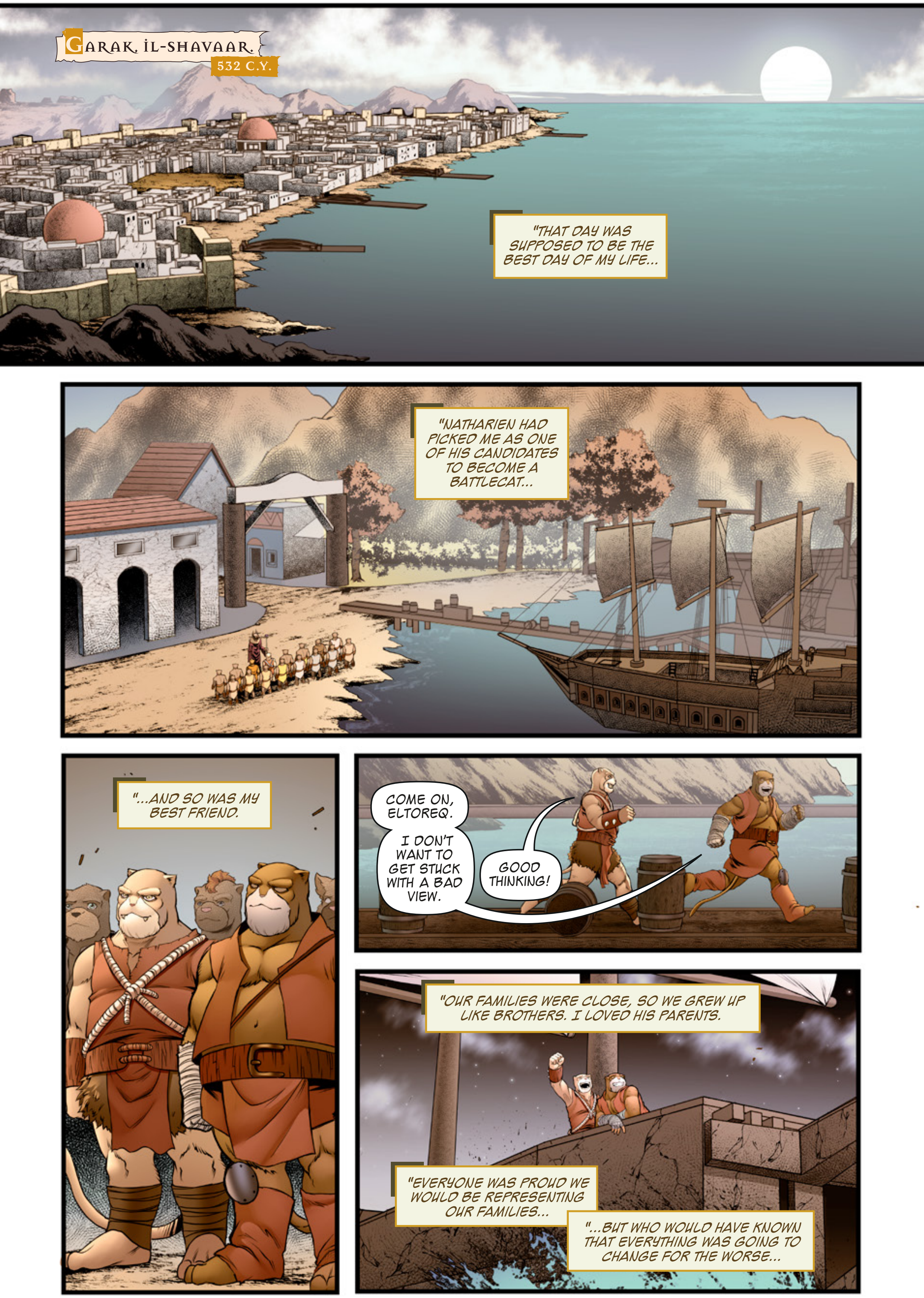

I'M DONE TAKING ORDERS FROM YOU!
A NEW GOD WILL RISE AND DEMOLISH *EVERYTHING* THE ERAMAD LINEAGE STANDS FOR.
ARE YOU LISTENING TO YOURSELF?!
THIS IS HERESEY, VALADAR!
THE BLINDFOLD HAS BEEN LIFTED.
I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW.
TODAY, ERAMAD DIES!

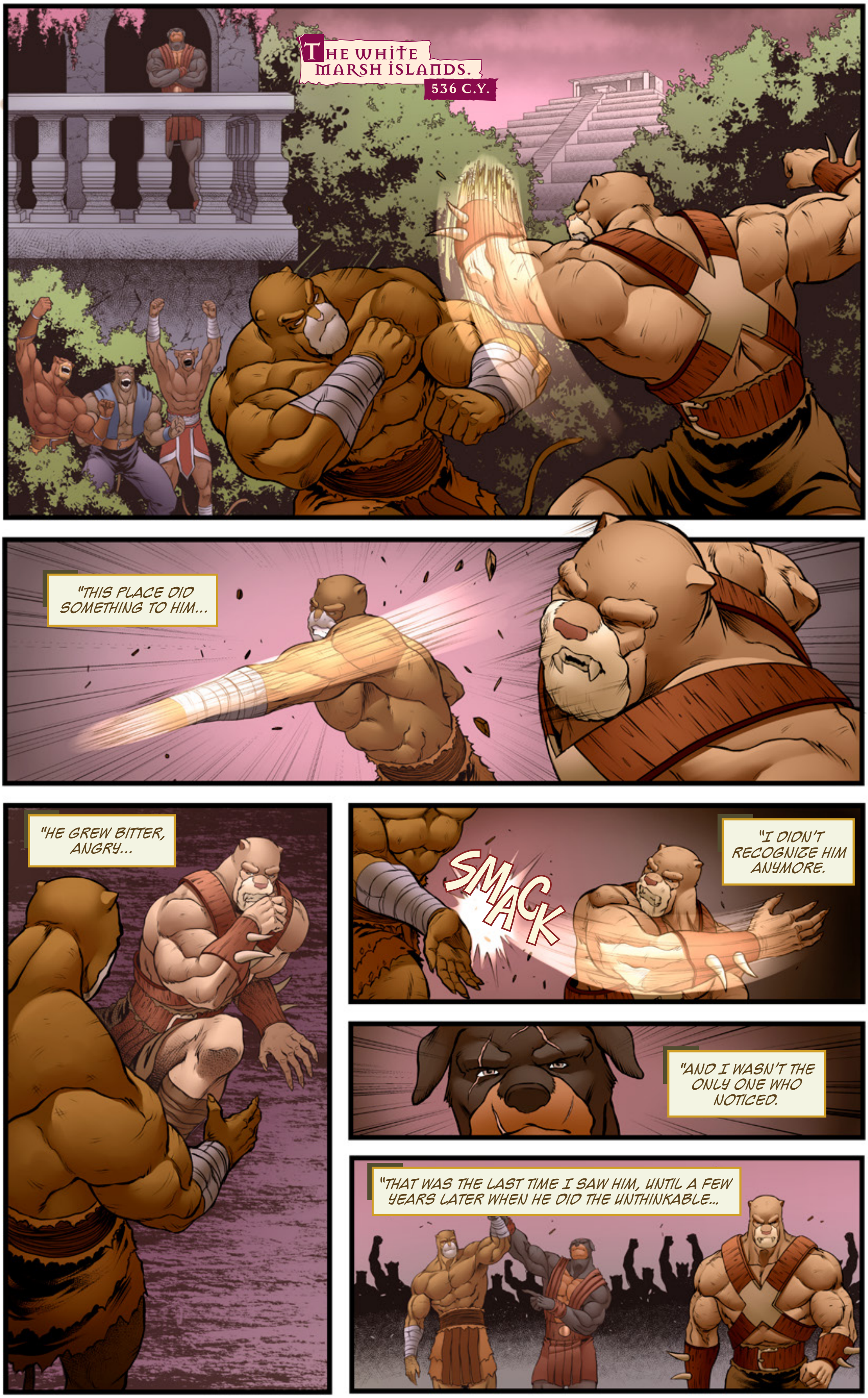

ENOUGH!
NO. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KILL ME.
I WILL NEVER STOP UNTIL YOU PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID.
THAT IS UNFORTUNATE.
NATHARIEN, LOCK HIM IN THE DARKEST DUNGEON.
THEN FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BATTLECATS.
YOUR GRACE...
...HE IS NOT BREATHING.

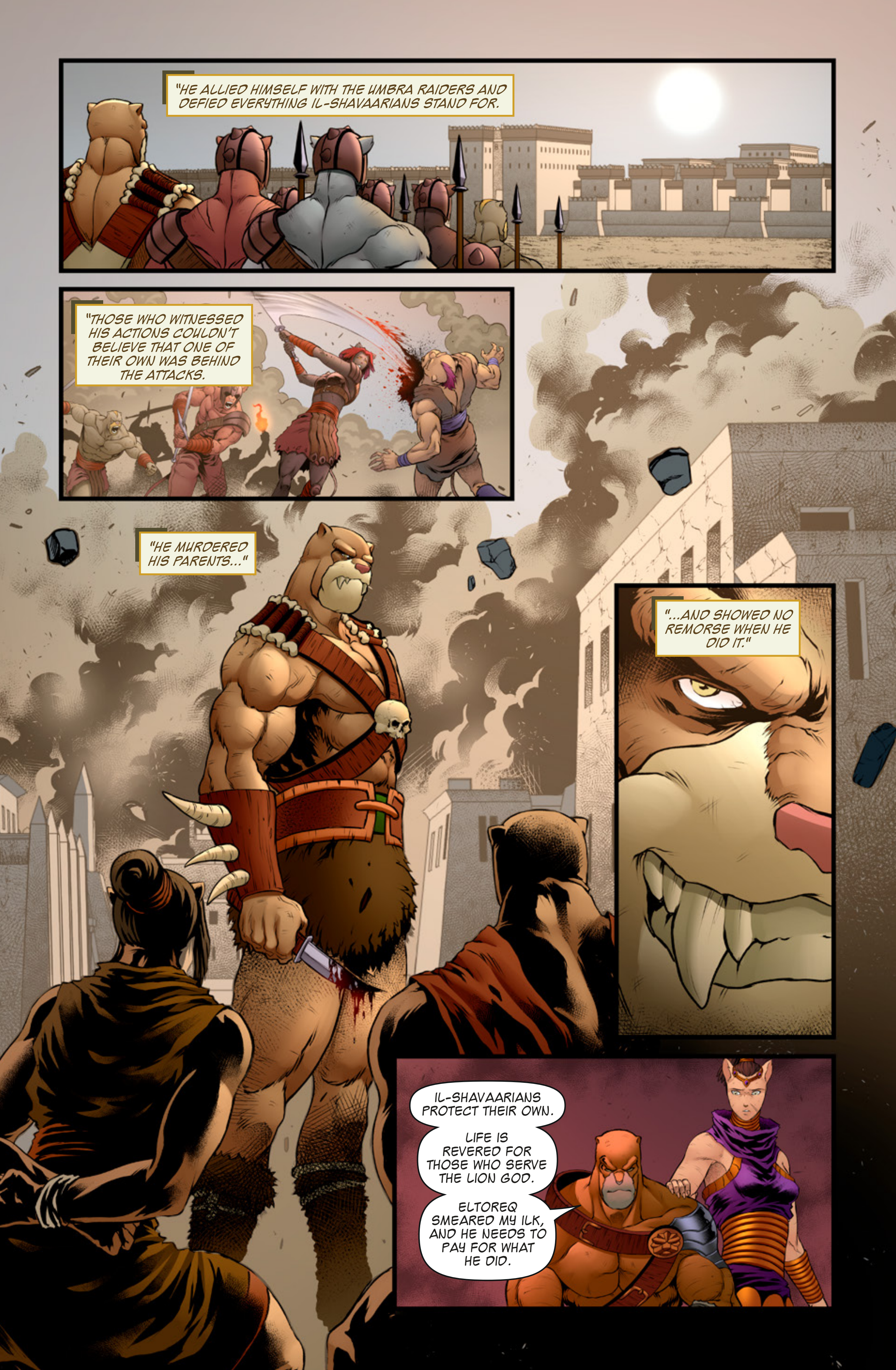

⫸SIGH⫷
KNOK
KNOK
KNOK
WHAT IS IT?
MY QUEEN...
WE HAVE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE BLOOD MOON.

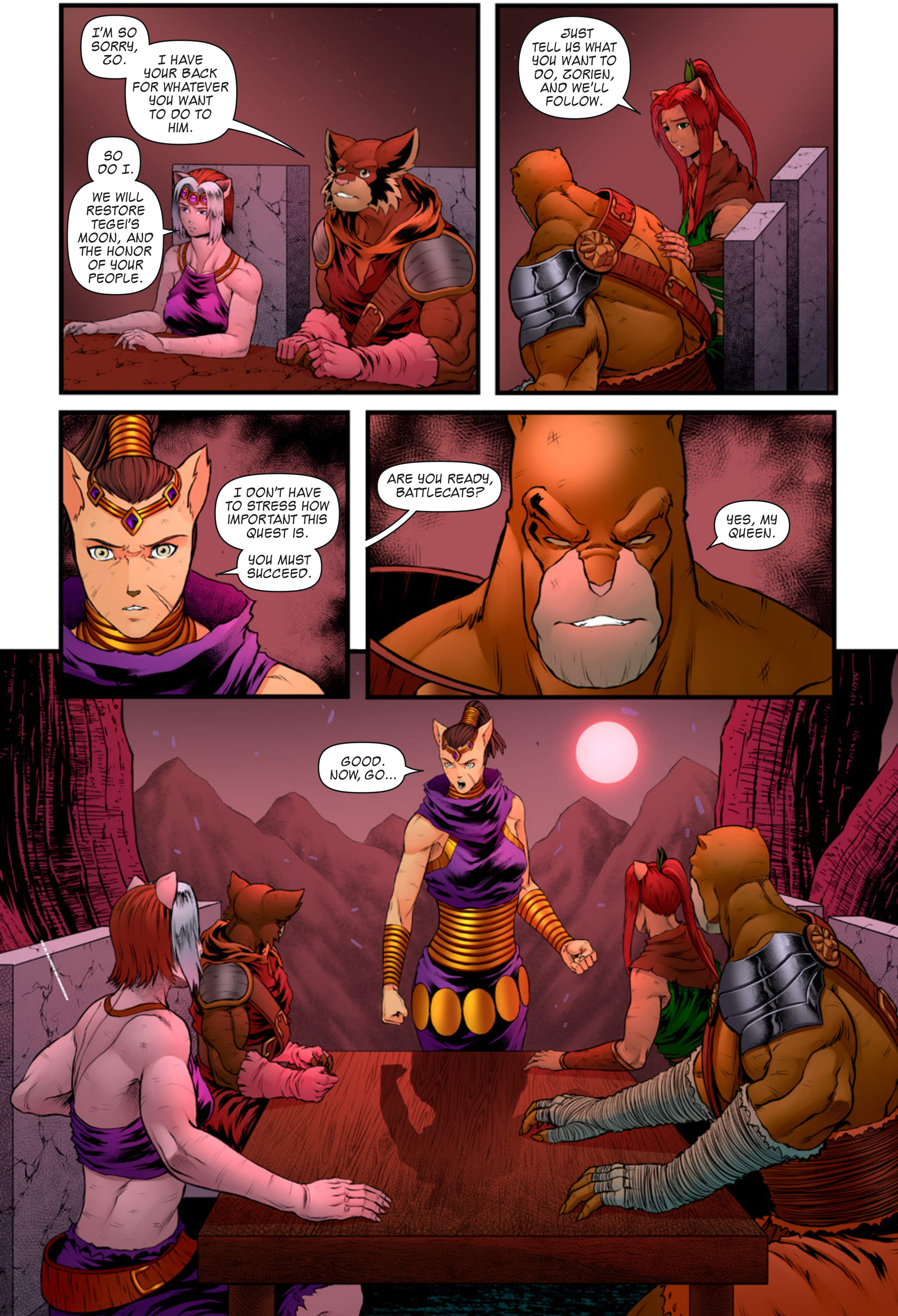

LATER...
MY SOLDIERS HAVE SCOURED THE LAND, AND WE FINALLY HAVE THEIR LOCATION...
BATTLECATS, YOU HAVE A NEW QUEST.
ARE WE FINALLY GOING TO WHOOP VALADAR'S TAIL?
IT'S ABOUT TIME.
WHERE IS HE? STORMHOLT?
HIDING IN THE BLOOD CANYONS?
AS MUCH AS I WISH VALADAR DEAD, FIRST, WE NEED TO GET THE SKIES OF VALDERIA BACK TO NORMAL.
THE BLOOD MOON IS YOUR TARGET.

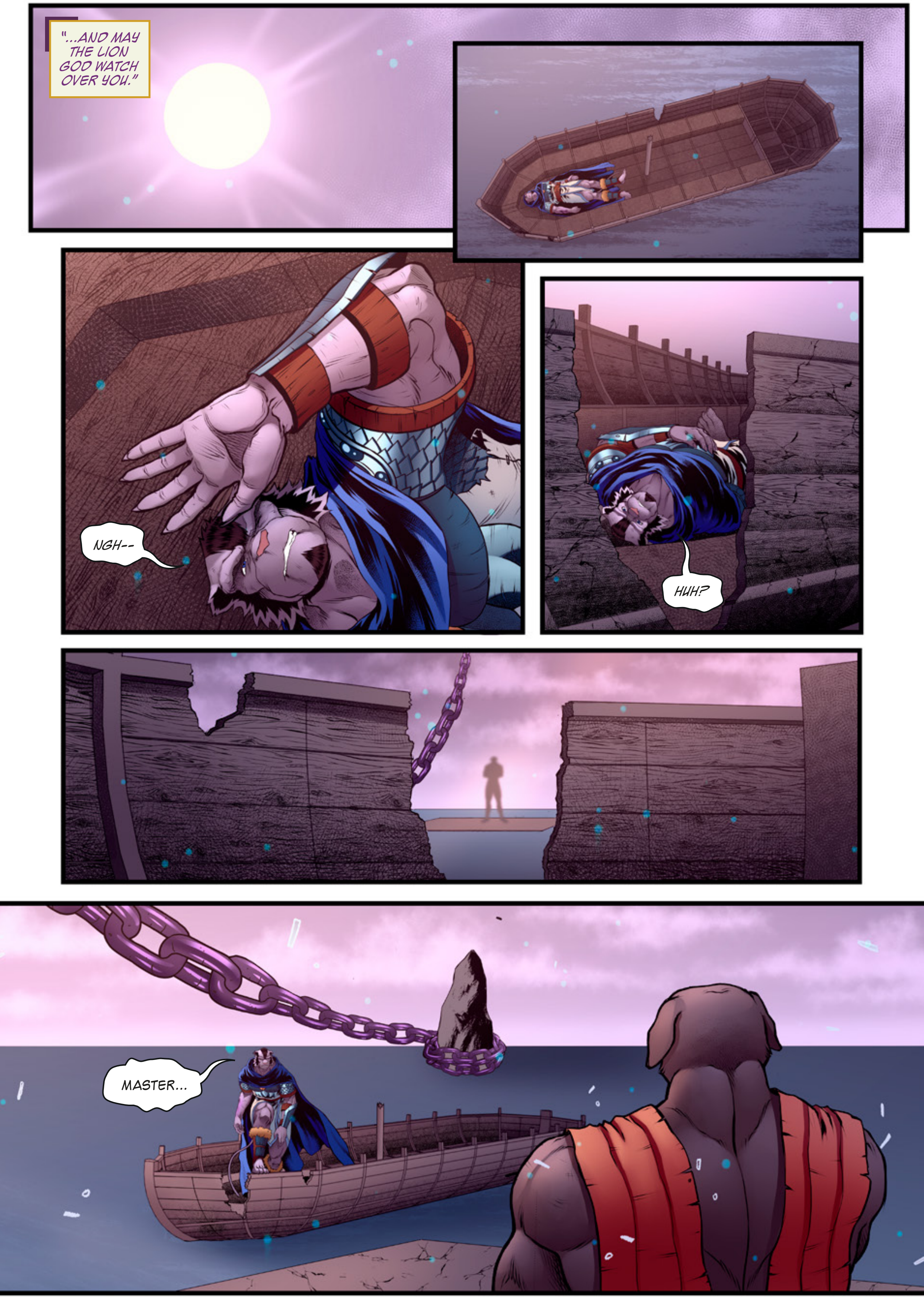

"THE BLOOD PRIESTS HAVE BEEN SPOTTED COMING IN AND OUT THE CAVES NEAR THE ZUMKA RIVER.
"THEY'VE BEEN LAYING LOW AND TRAVELING TO JARISH TO GATHER SUPPLIES WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING."
ONLY ONE OTHER MAGIC WIELDER USED TO HIDE IN CAVES...
...THE SKELETON LORD.
WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE DEALING WITH HERE, VAELA?
THAT'S NOT ALL...**ELTOREQ** IS WITH THEM.
I KNOW THIS IS PERSONAL FOR YOU, ZORIEN.
I NEED TO KNOW THAT YOU CAN PUT YOUR FEELINGS ASIDE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO.
BESIDES, I OWE HIM FOR WHAT HE DID TO ME IN THE **DARK FOREST**.
I'LL GET PAYBACK FOR BOTH OF US.
NO, KALEERA.
WHAT ELTOREQ DID WAS BEYOND PERSONAL...

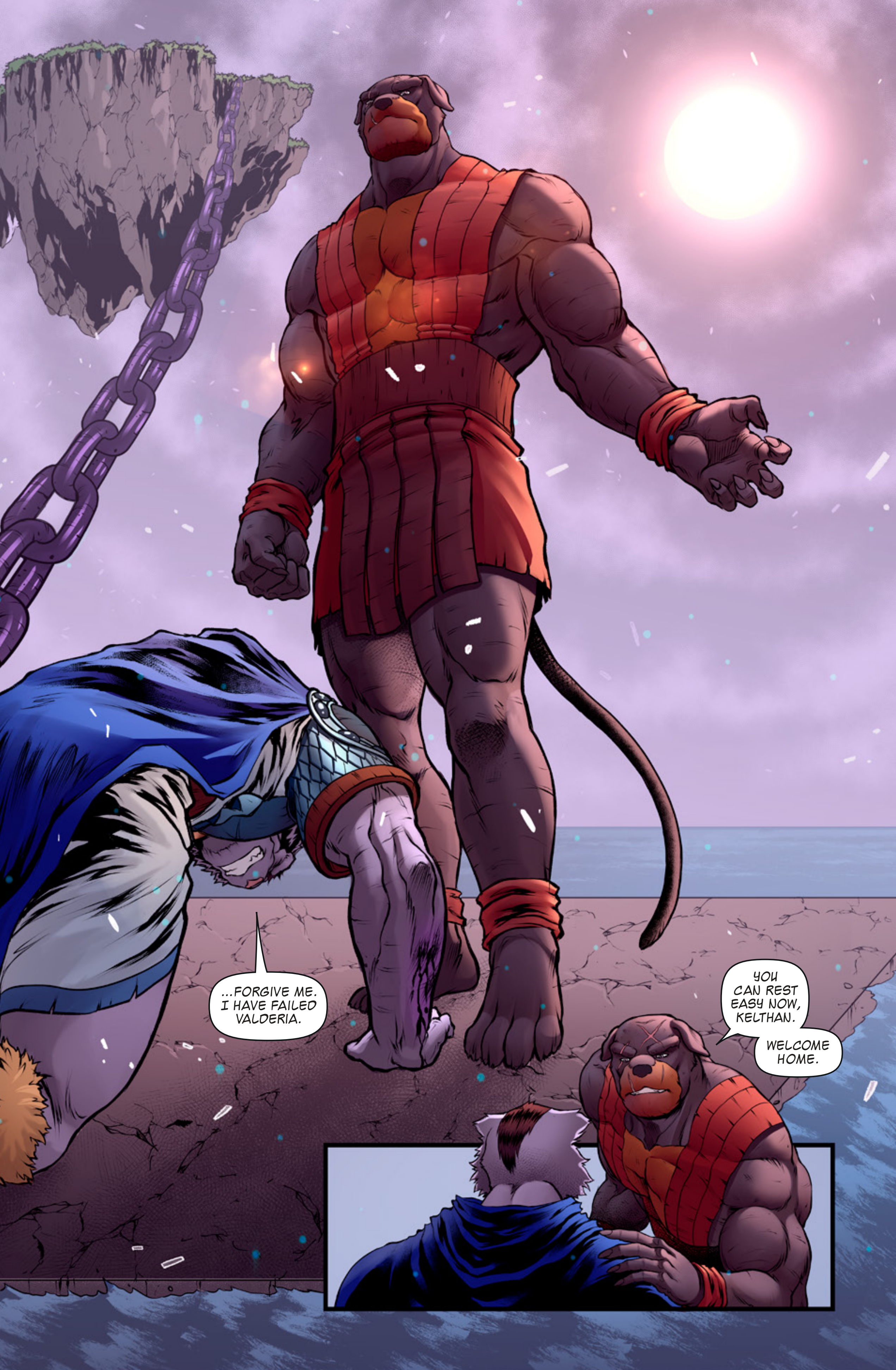

GARAK IL-SHAVAAR
532 C.Y.
"THAT DAY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE...
"NATHARIEN HAD PICKED ME AS ONE OF HIS CANDIDATES TO BECOME A BATTLECAT...
"...AND SO WAS MY BEST FRIEND.
COME ON, ELTOREQ.
I DON'T WANT TO GET STUCK WITH A BAD VIEW.
GOOD THINKING!
"OUR FAMILIES WERE CLOSE, SO WE GREW UP LIKE BROTHERS. I LOVED HIS PARENTS.
"EVERYONE WAS PROUD WE WOULD BE REPRESENTING OUR FAMILIES...
"...BUT WHO WOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT EVERYTHING WAS GOING TO CHANGE FOR THE WORSE...


THE WHITE MARSH ISLANDS.
536 C.Y.
"THIS PLACE DID SOMETHING TO HIM...
"HE GREW BITTER, ANGRY...
SMACK
"I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE HIM ANYMORE.
"AND I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO NOTICED.
"THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW HIM, UNTIL A FEW YEARS LATER WHEN HE DID THE UNTHINKABLE...


"HE ALLIED HIMSELF WITH THE UMBRA RAIDERS AND DEFIED EVERYTHING IL-SHAVAARIANS STAND FOR.
"THOSE WHO WITNESSED HIS ACTIONS COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT ONE OF THEIR OWN WAS BEHIND THE ATTACKS.
"HE MURDERED HIS PARENTS..."
"...AND SHOWED NO REMORSE WHEN HE DID IT."
IL-SHAVAARIANS PROTECT THEIR OWN.
LIFE IS REVERED FOR THOSE WHO SERVE THE LION GOD.
ELTOREQ SMEARED MY ILK, AND HE NEEDS TO PAY FOR WHAT HE DID.

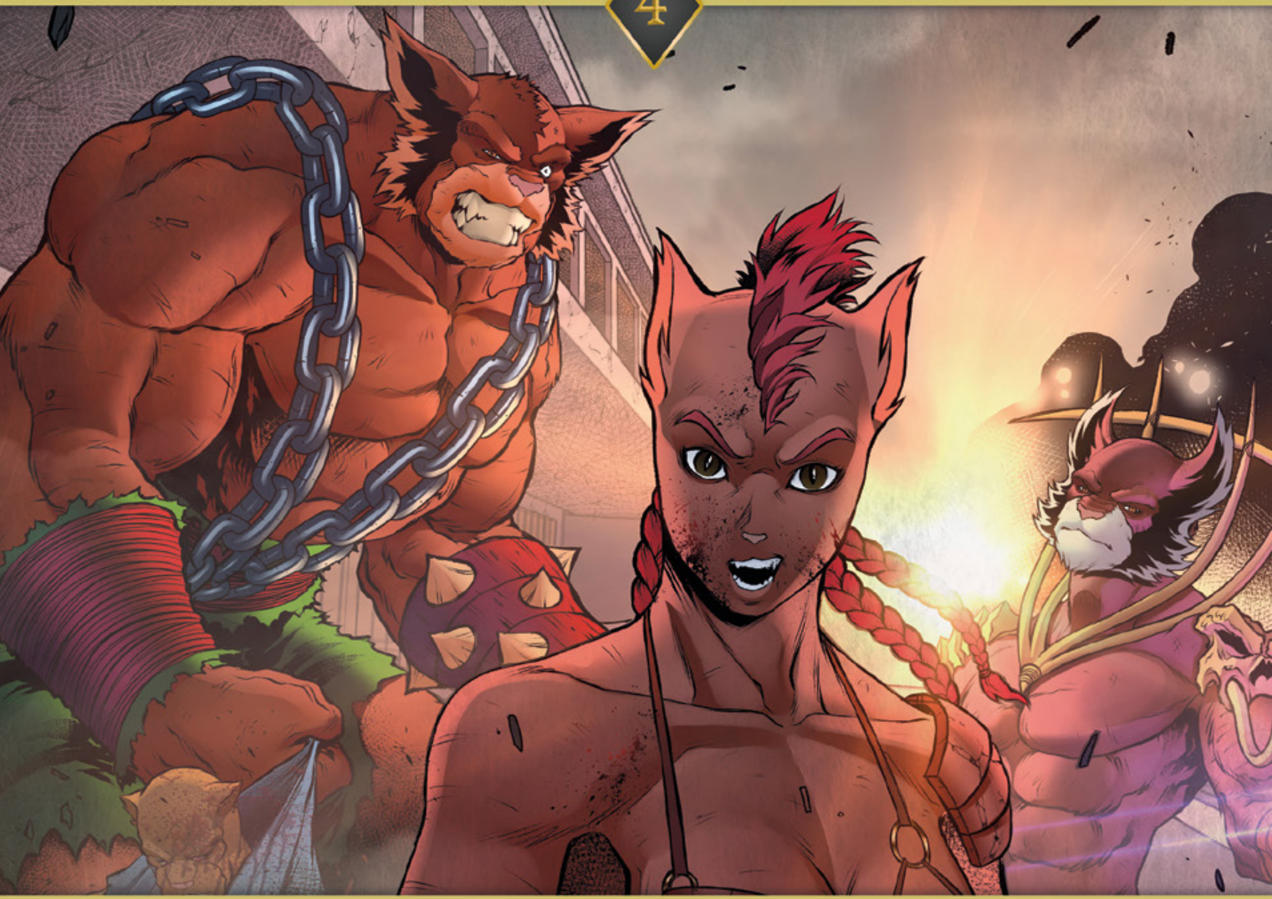

I'M SO SORRY, ZO.
I HAVE YOUR BACK FOR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO DO TO HIM.
SO DO I.
WE WILL RESTORE TEGEI'S MOON, AND THE HONOR OF YOUR PEOPLE.
JUST TELL US WHAT YOU WANT TO DO, ZORIEN, AND WE'LL FOLLOW.
I DON'T HAVE TO STRESS HOW IMPORTANT THIS QUEST IS.
YOU MUST SUCCEED.
ARE YOU READY, BATTLECATS?
YES, MY QUEEN.
GOOD. NOW, GO...


"...AND MAY THE LION GOD WATCH OVER YOU."
NGH--
HUH?
MASTER...


...FORGIVE ME. I HAVE FAILED VALDERIA.
YOU CAN REST EASY NOW, KELTHAN.
WELCOME HOME.

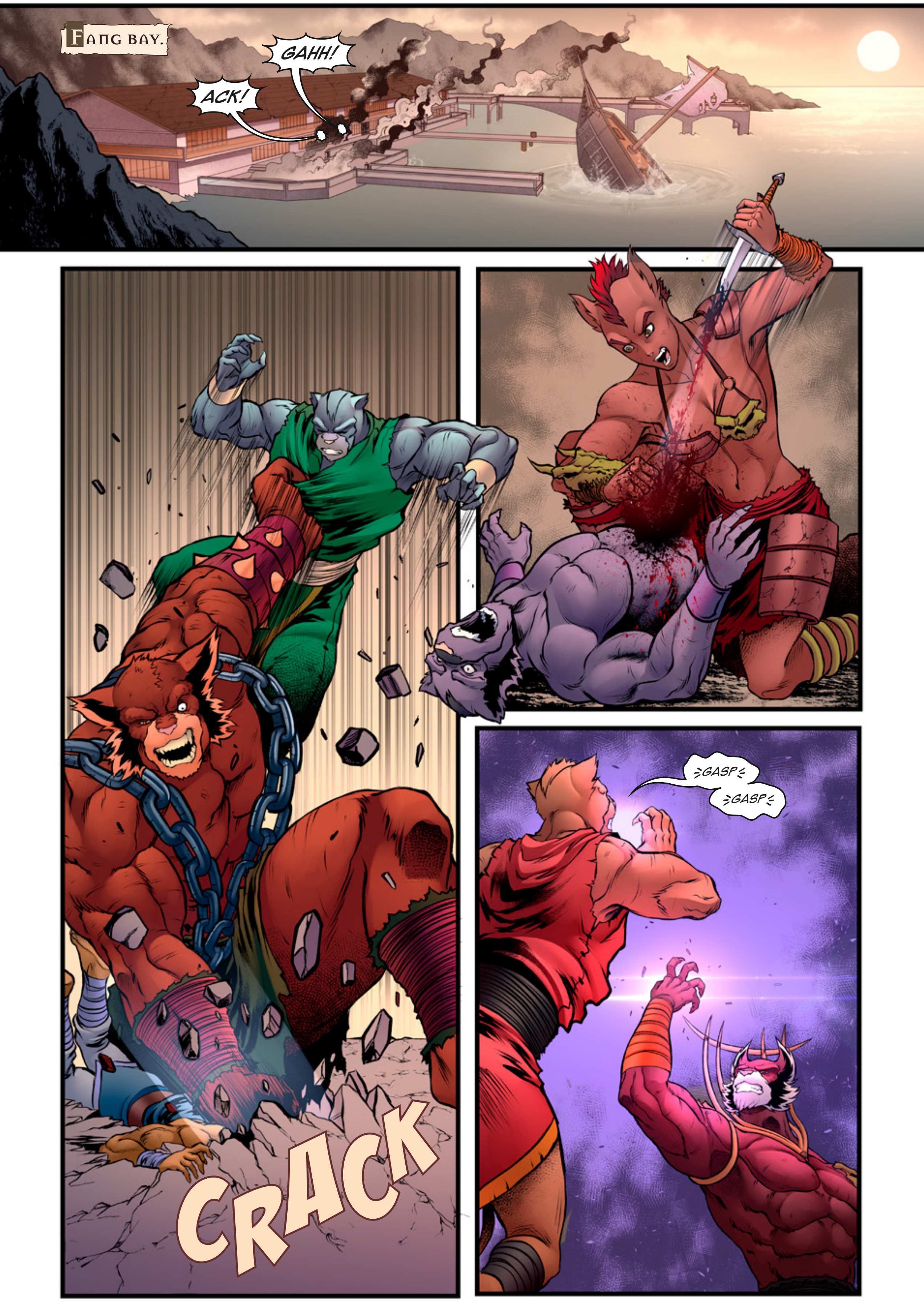
BURDENS LIFTED

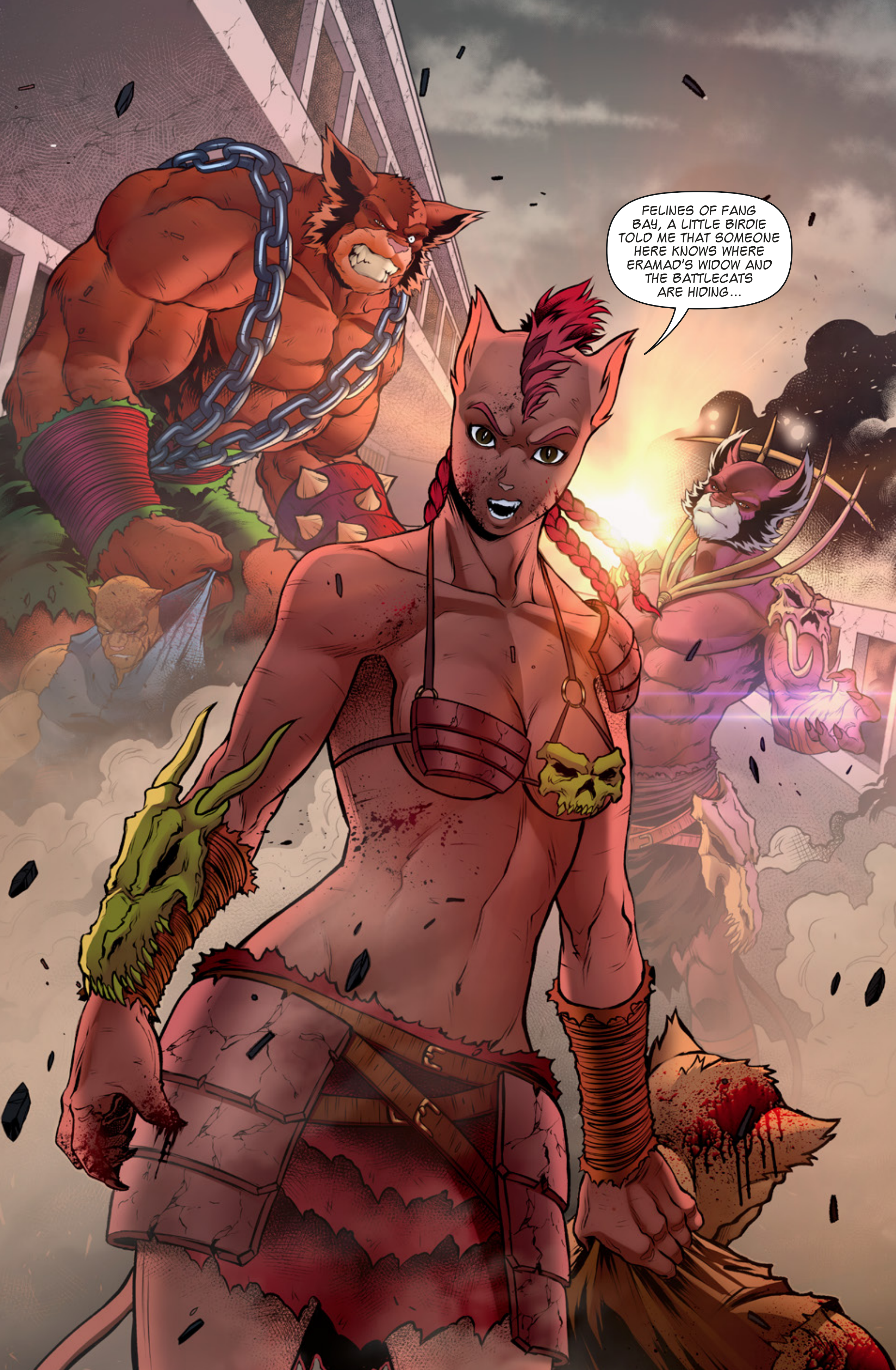
4

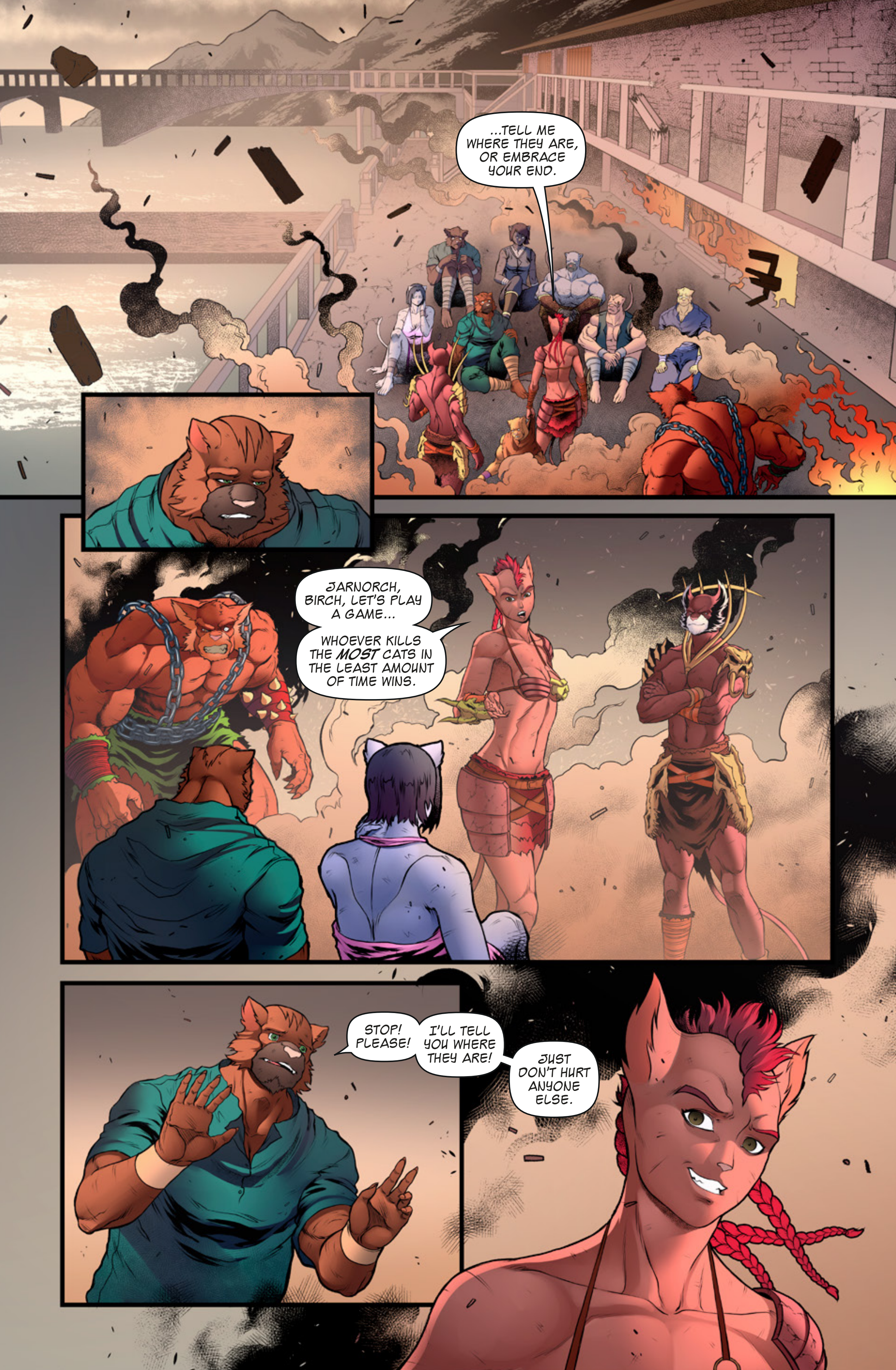


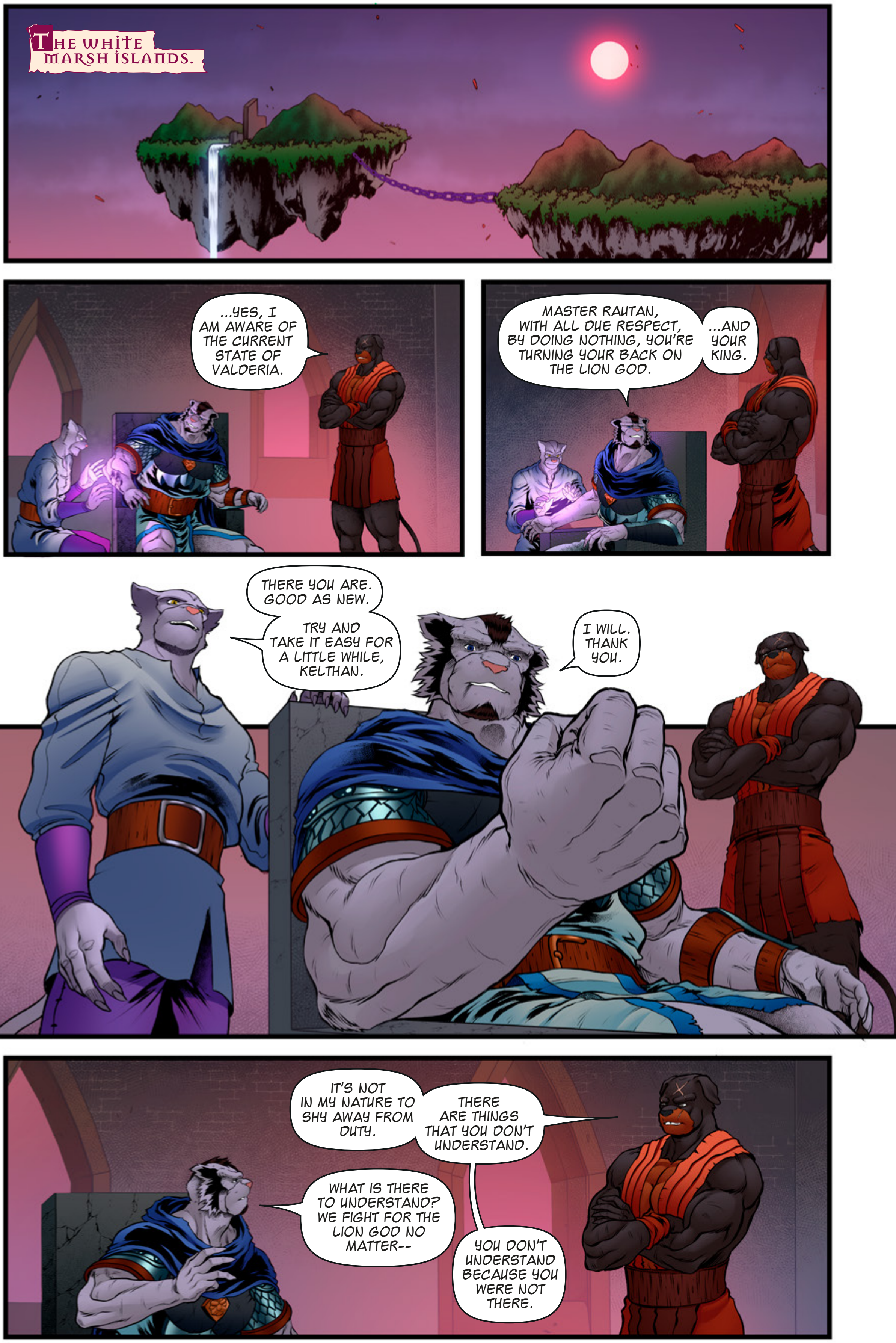
Chapter Four

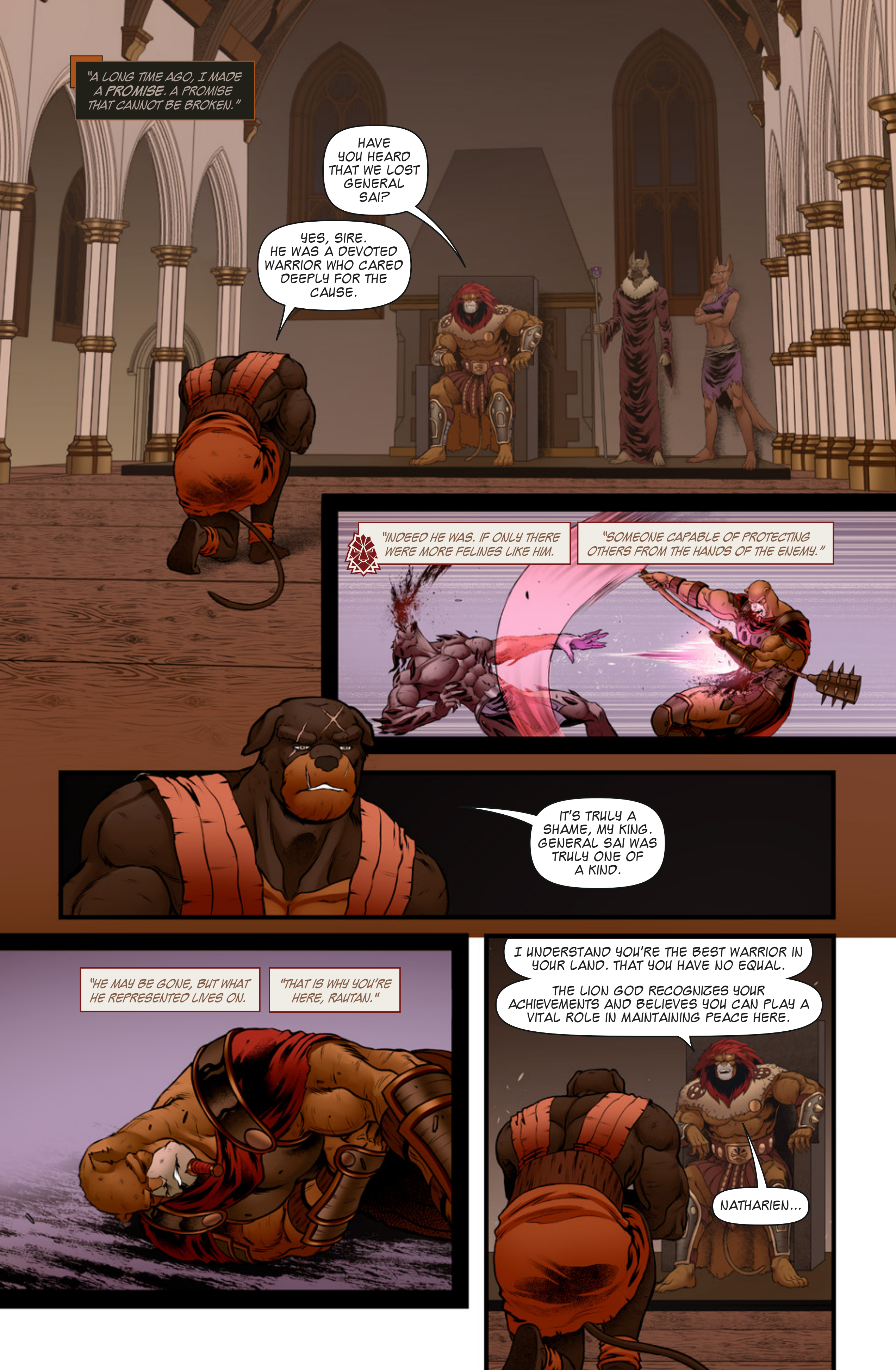
BATTLECATS®

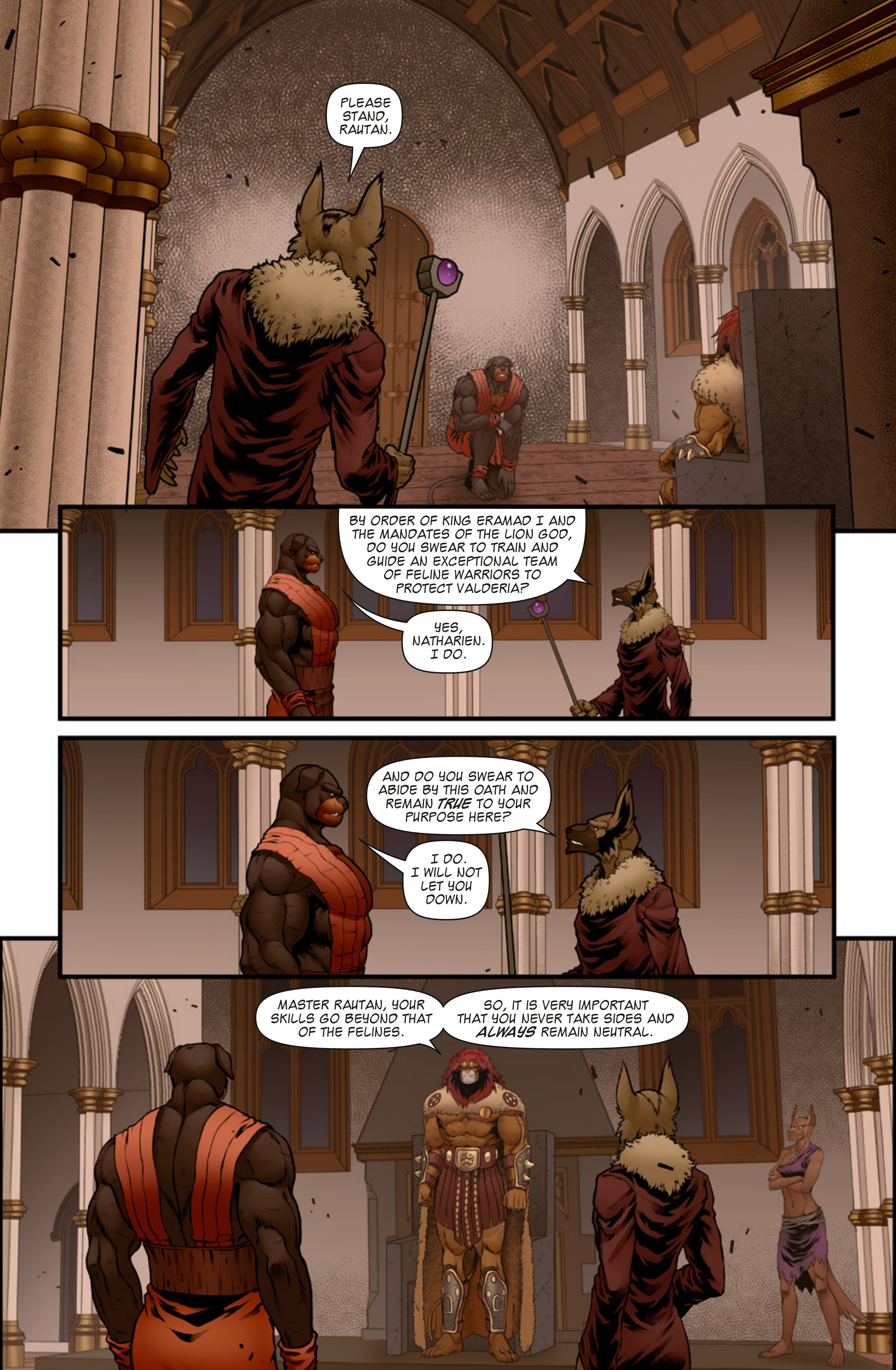

FANG BAY.
ACK!
GAHH!
CRACK
GASP
GASP

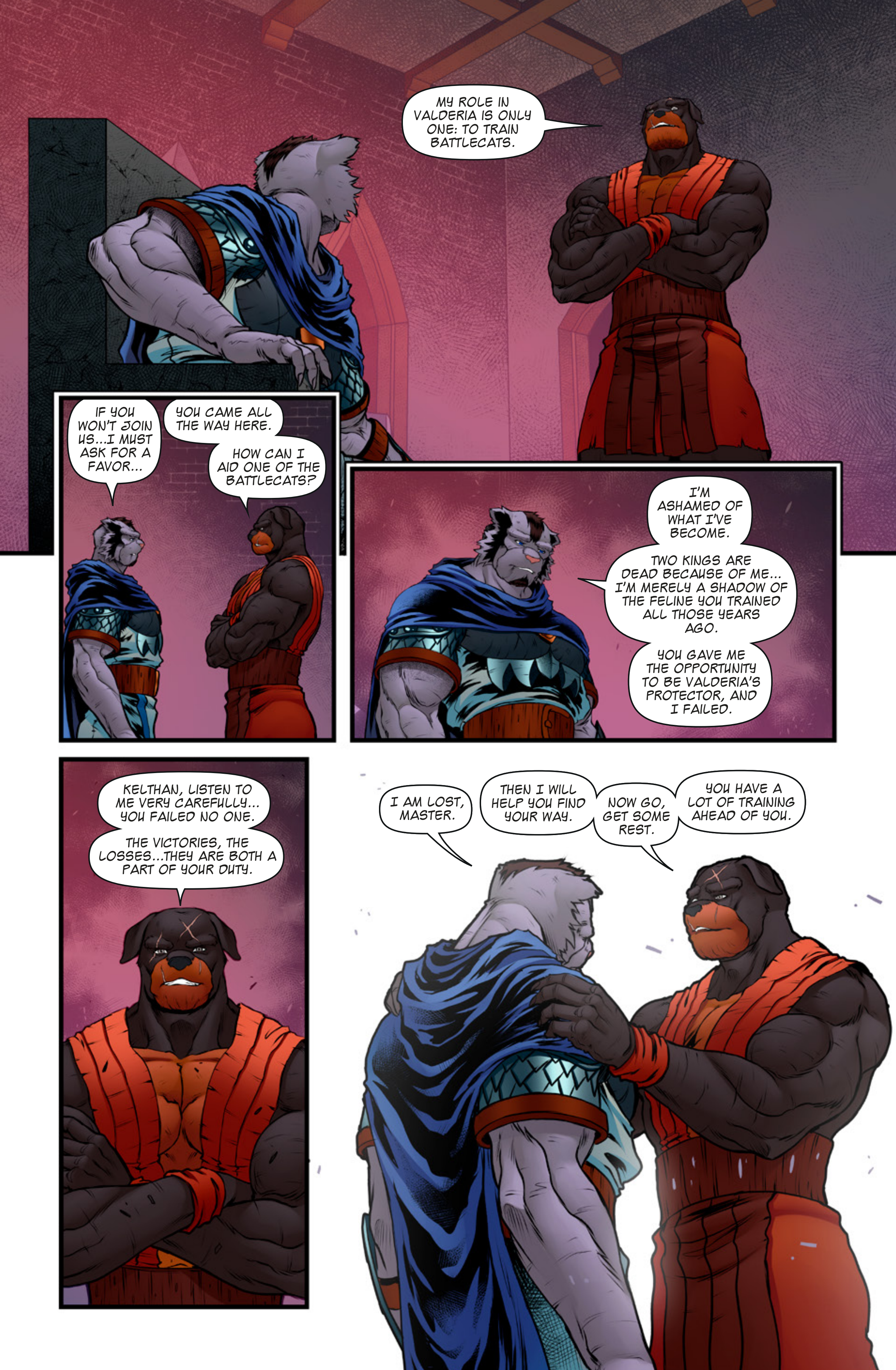

FELINES OF FANG BAY, A LITTLE BIRDIE TOLD ME THAT SOMEONE HERE KNOWS WHERE ERAMAD'S WIDOW AND THE BATTLECATS ARE HIDING...

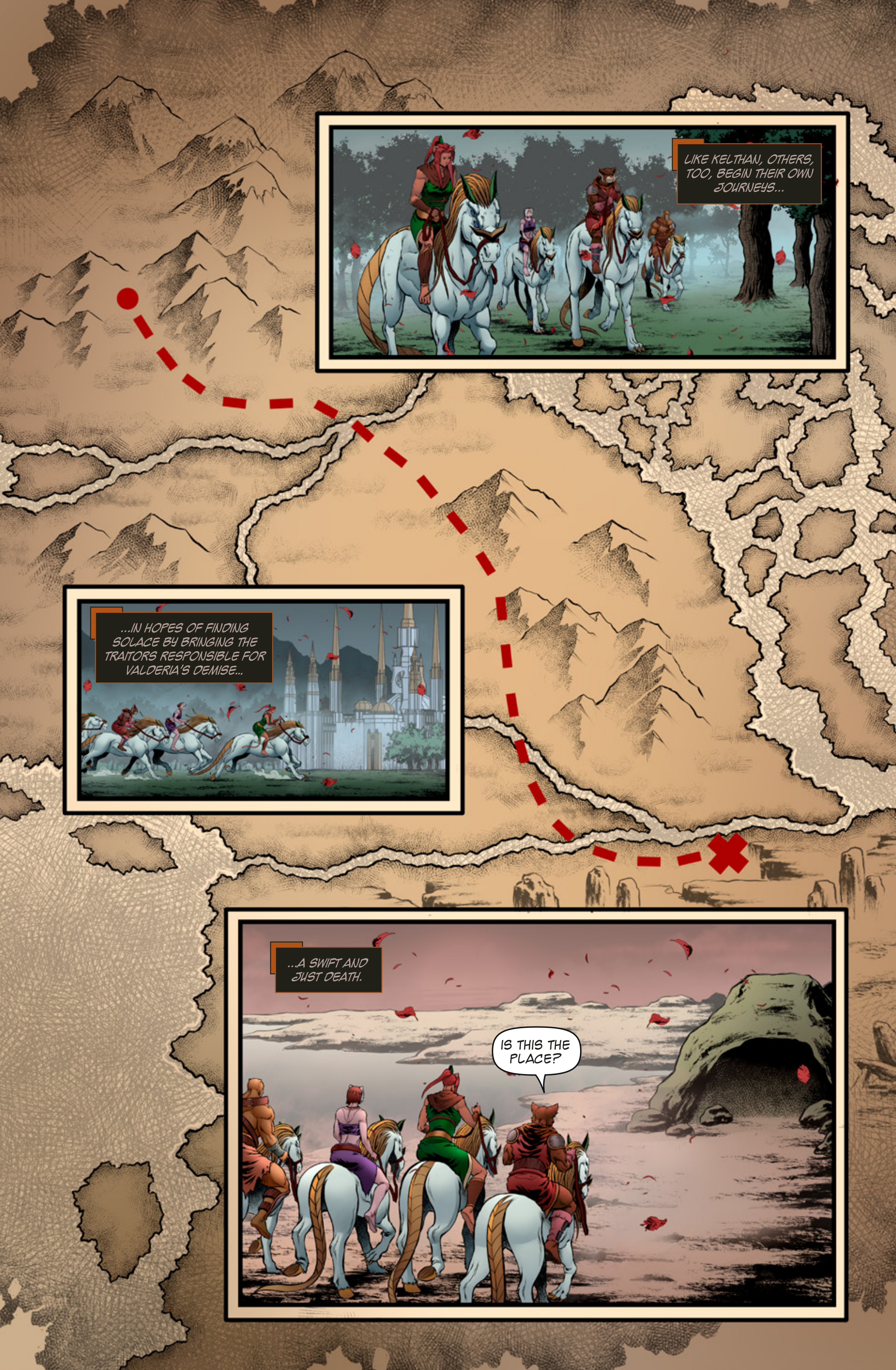

...TELL ME WHERE THEY ARE, OR EMBRACE YOUR END.
JARNORCH, BIRCH, LET'S PLAY A GAME...
WHOEVER KILLS THE *MOST* CATS IN THE LEAST AMOUNT OF TIME WINS.
STOP! PLEASE!
I'LL TELL YOU WHERE THEY ARE!
JUST DON'T HURT ANYONE ELSE.

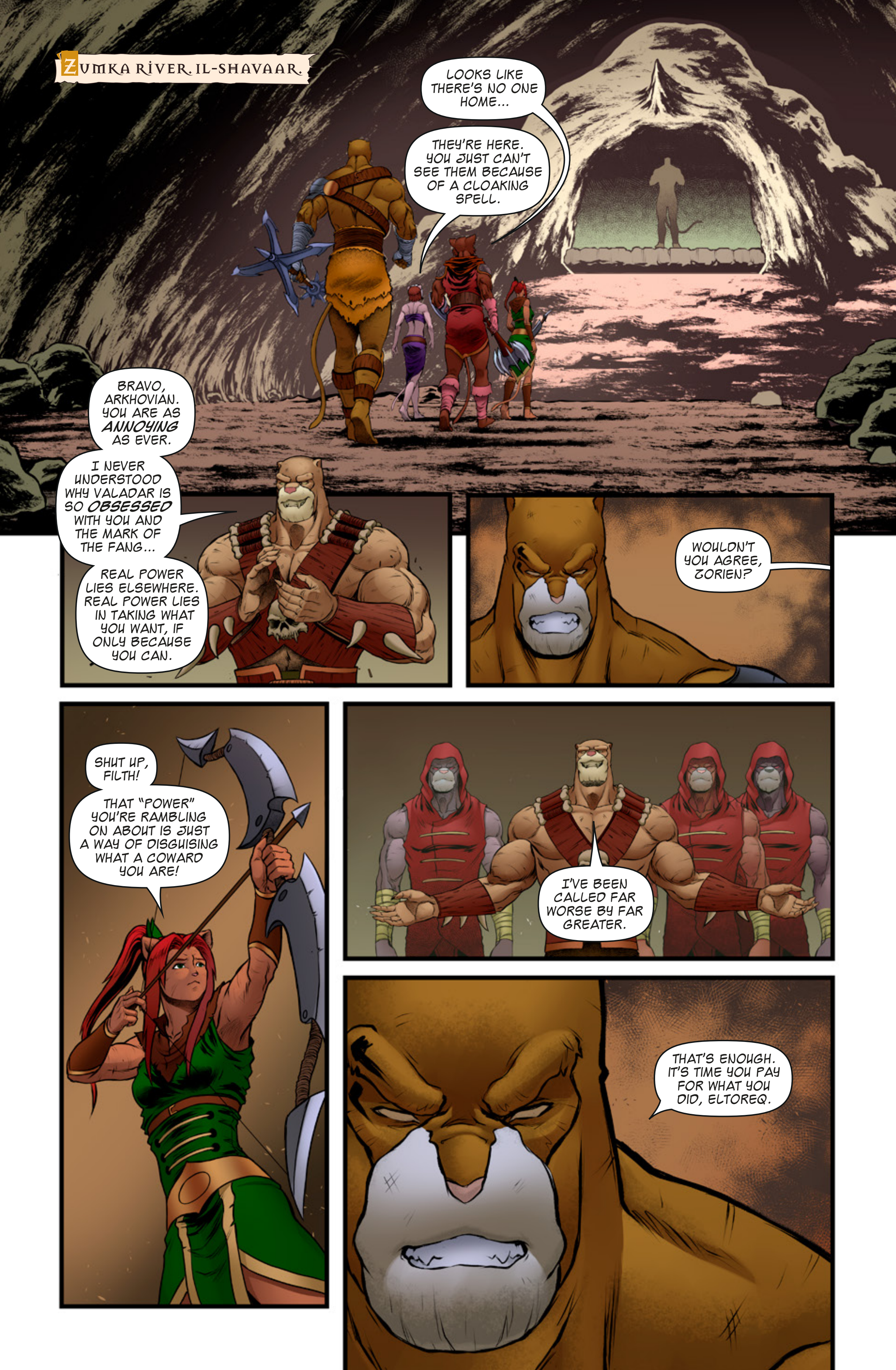

THE WHITE MARSH ISLANDS.
...YES, I AM AWARE OF THE CURRENT STATE OF VALDERIA.
MASTER RAUTAN, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, BY DOING NOTHING, YOU'RE TURNING YOUR BACK ON THE LION GOD.
...AND YOUR KING.
THERE YOU ARE. GOOD AS NEW.
TRY AND TAKE IT EASY FOR A LITTLE WHILE, KELTHAN.
I WILL. THANK YOU.
IT'S NOT IN MY NATURE TO SHY AWAY FROM DUTY.
THERE ARE THINGS THAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
WHAT IS THERE TO UNDERSTAND? WE FIGHT FOR THE LION GOD NO MATTER--
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND BECAUSE YOU WERE NOT THERE.

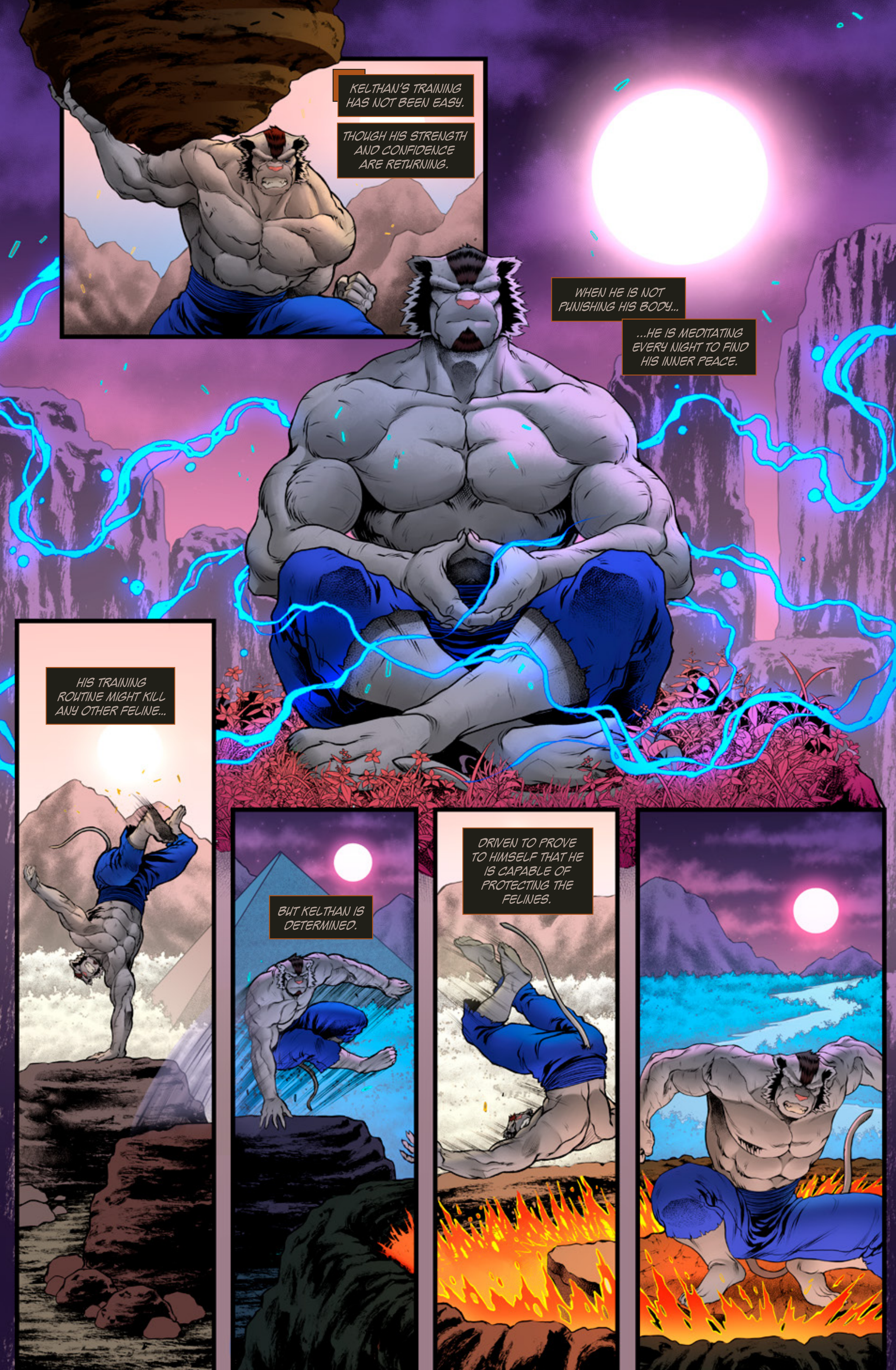

"A LONG TIME AGO, I MADE A **PROMISE**. A PROMISE THAT CANNOT BE BROKEN."
HAVE YOU HEARD THAT WE LOST GENERAL SAI?
YES, SIRE. HE WAS A DEVOTED WARRIOR WHO CARED DEEPLY FOR THE CAUSE.
"INDEED HE WAS. IF ONLY THERE WERE MORE FELINES LIKE HIM.
"SOMEONE CAPABLE OF PROTECTING OTHERS FROM THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY."
IT'S TRULY A SHAME, MY KING. GENERAL SAI WAS TRULY ONE OF A KIND.
"HE MAY BE GONE, BUT WHAT HE REPRESENTED LIVES ON.
"THAT IS WHY YOU'RE HERE, RAUTAN."
I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE THE BEST WARRIOR IN YOUR LAND. THAT YOU HAVE NO EQUAL.
THE LION GOD RECOGNIZES YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS AND BELIEVES YOU CAN PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN MAINTAINING PEACE HERE.
NATHARIEN...

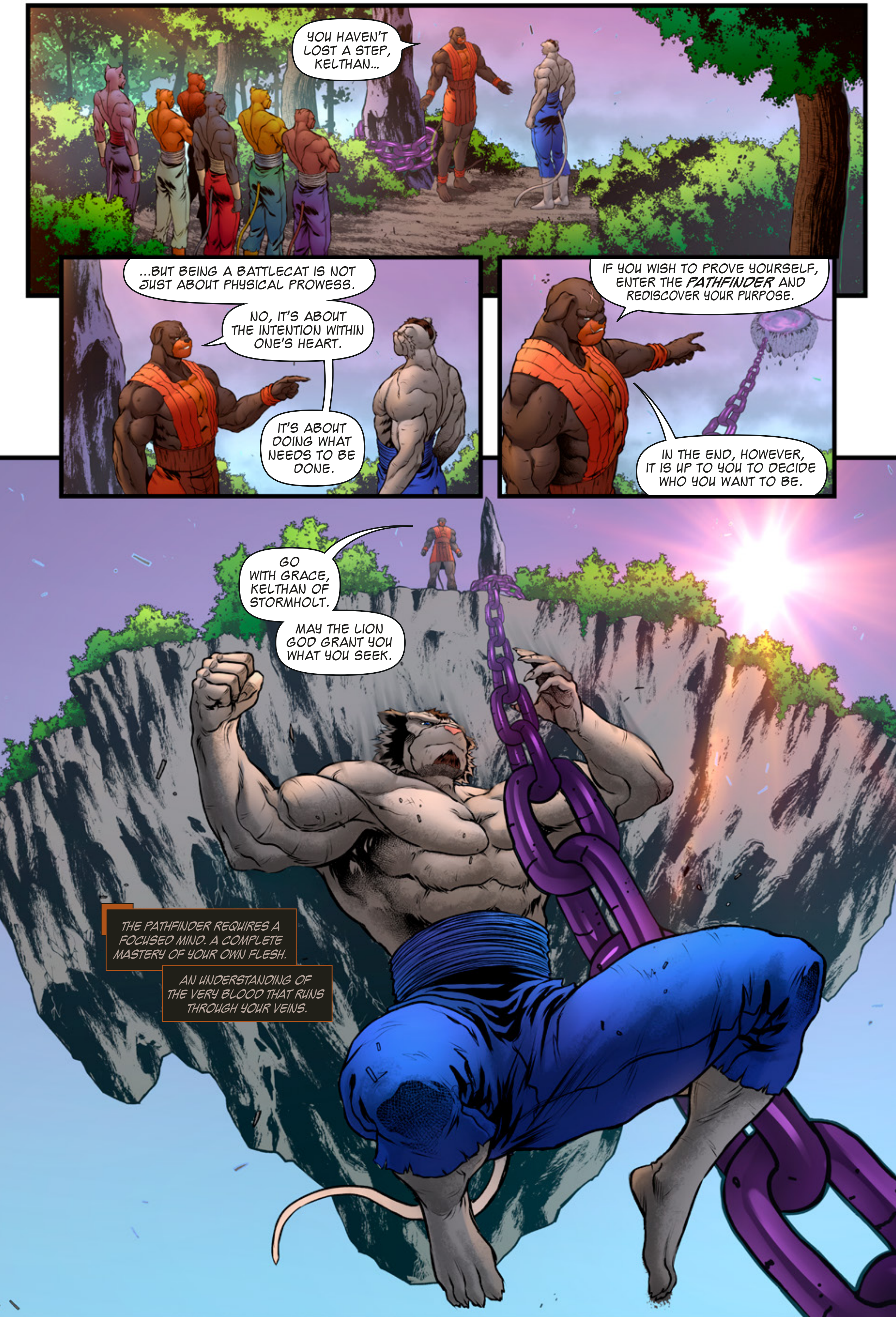

PLEASE STAND, RAUTAN.
BY ORDER OF KING ERAMAD I AND THE MANDATES OF THE LION GOD, DO YOU SWEAR TO TRAIN AND GUIDE AN EXCEPTIONAL TEAM OF FELINE WARRIORS TO PROTECT VALDERIA?
YES, NATHARIEN. I DO.
AND DO YOU SWEAR TO ABIDE BY THIS OATH AND REMAIN *TRUE* TO YOUR PURPOSE HERE?
I DO. I WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN.
MASTER RAUTAN, YOUR SKILLS GO BEYOND THAT OF THE FELINES.
SO, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU NEVER TAKE SIDES AND *ALWAYS* REMAIN NEUTRAL.

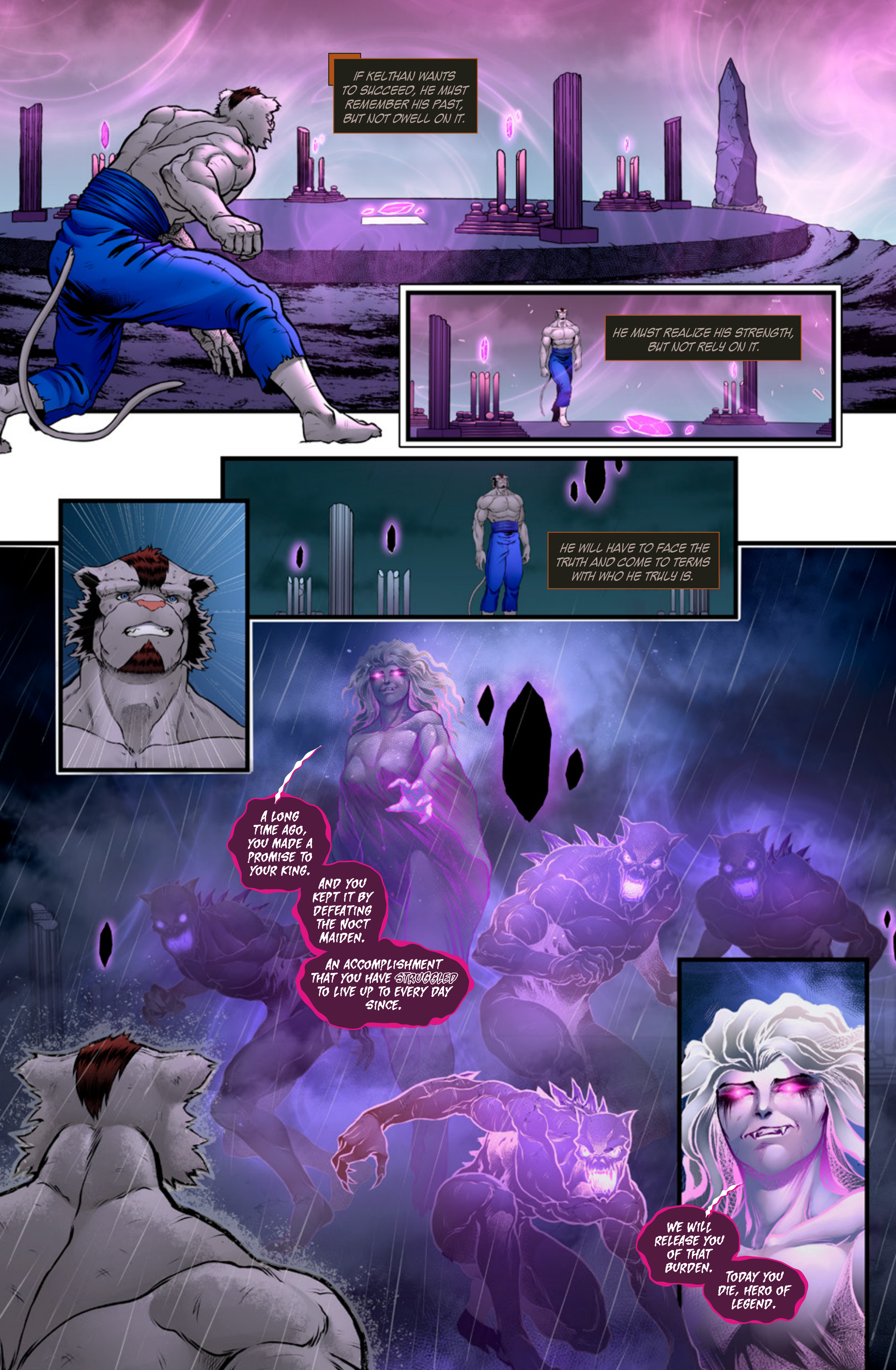

MY ROLE IN VALDERIA IS ONLY ONE: TO TRAIN BATTLECATS.
IF YOU WON'T JOIN US...I MUST ASK FOR A FAVOR...
YOU CAME ALL THE WAY HERE.
HOW CAN I AID ONE OF THE BATTLECATS?
I'M ASHAMED OF WHAT I'VE BECOME.
TWO KINGS ARE DEAD BECAUSE OF ME... I'M MERELY A SHADOW OF THE FELINE YOU TRAINED ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
YOU GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE VALDERIA'S PROTECTOR, AND I FAILED.
KELTHAN, LISTEN TO ME VERY CAREFULLY... YOU FAILED NO ONE.
THE VICTORIES, THE LOSSES...THEY ARE BOTH A PART OF YOUR DUTY.
I AM LOST, MASTER.
THEN I WILL HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY.
NOW GO, GET SOME REST.
YOU HAVE A LOT OF TRAINING AHEAD OF YOU.

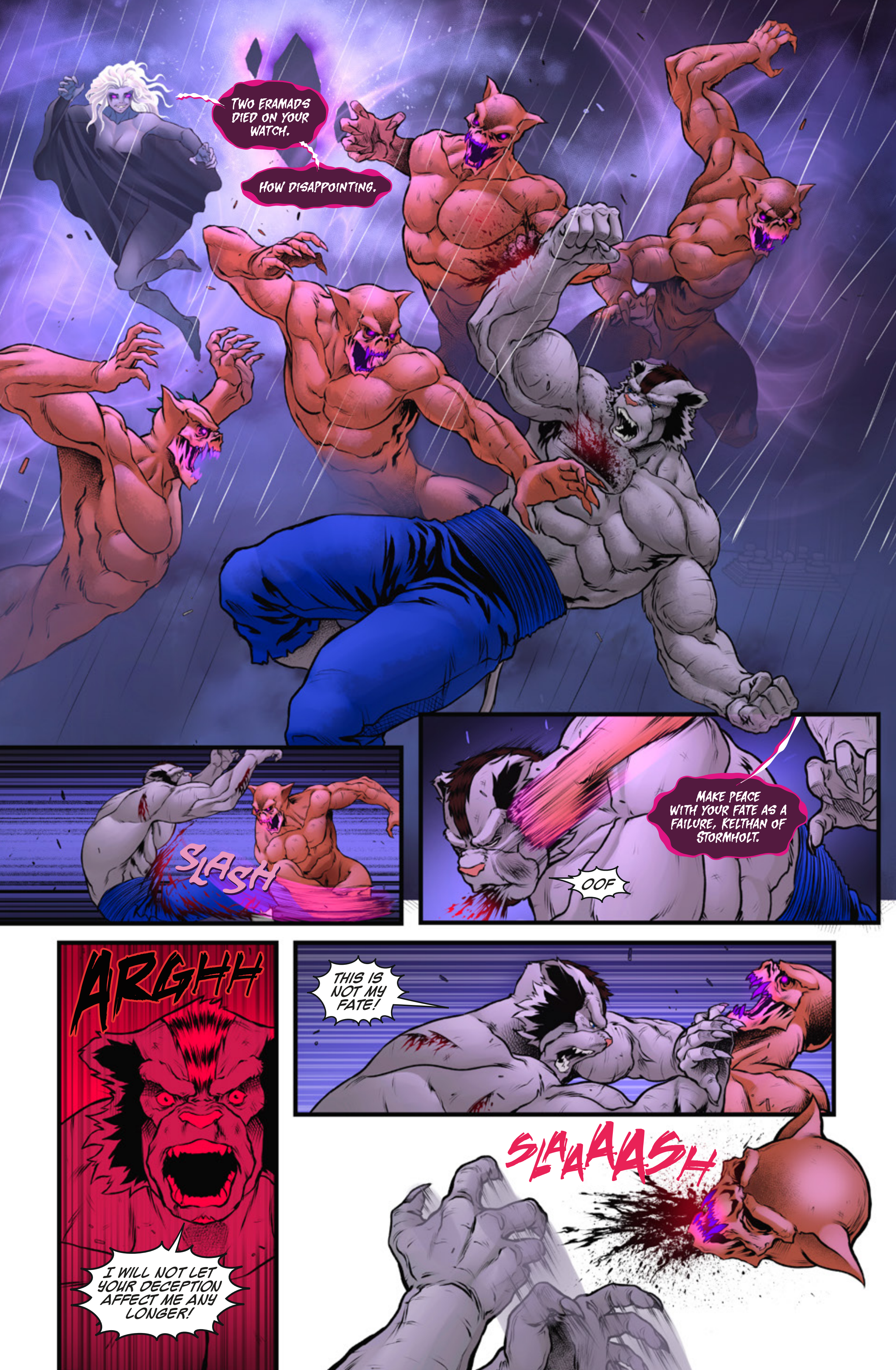

LIKE KELTHAN, OTHERS, TOO, BEGIN THEIR OWN JOURNEYS...
...IN HOPES OF FINDING SOLACE BY BRINGING THE TRAITORS RESPONSIBLE FOR VALDERIA'S DEMISE...
...A SWIFT AND JUST DEATH.
IS THIS THE PLACE?

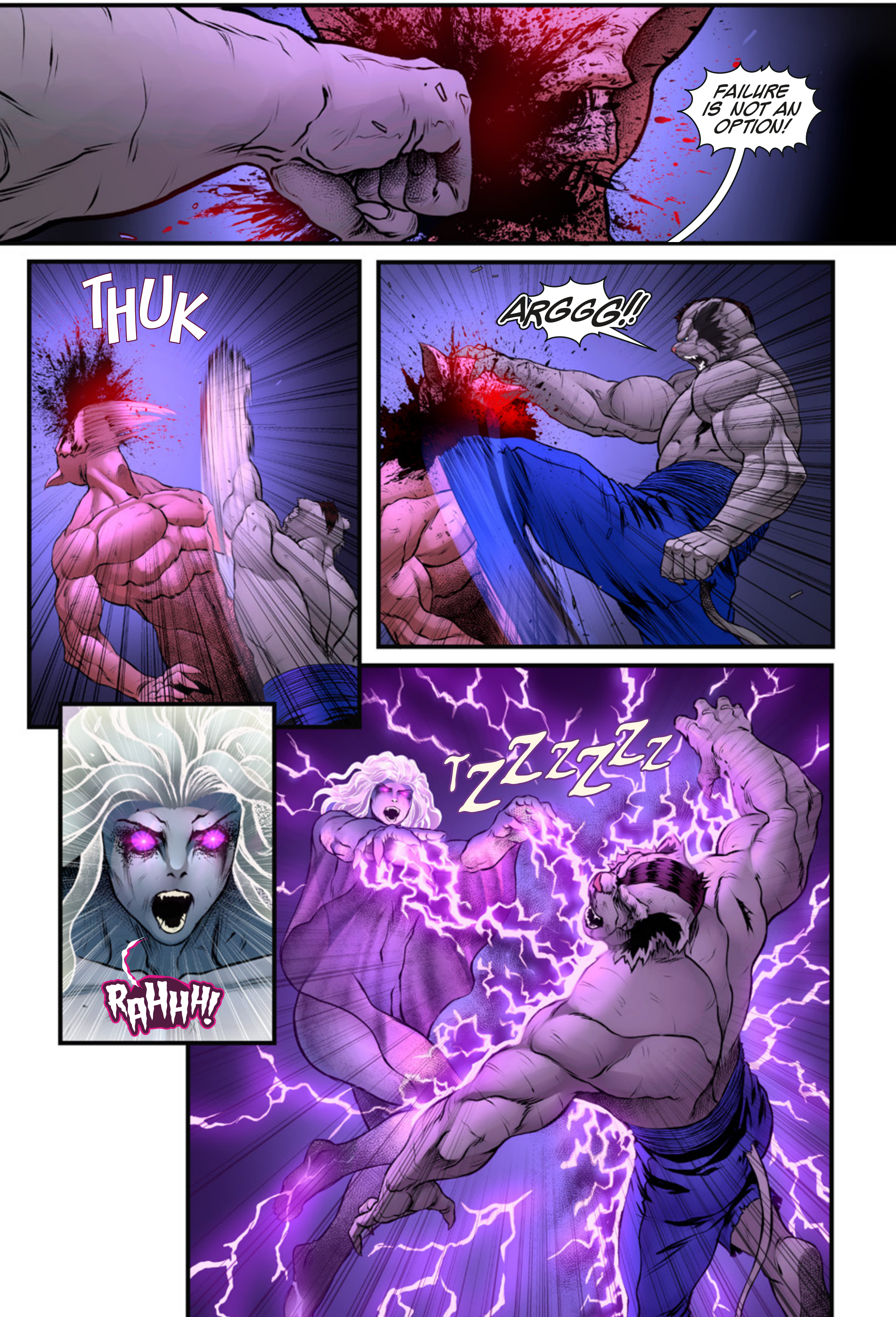

ZUMKA RIVER. IL-SHAVAAR.
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S NO ONE HOME...
THEY'RE HERE. YOU JUST CAN'T SEE THEM BECAUSE OF A CLOAKING SPELL.
BRAVO, ARKHOVIAN. YOU ARE AS *ANNOYING* AS EVER.
I NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY VALADAR IS SO *OBSESSED* WITH YOU AND THE MARK OF THE FANG...
REAL POWER LIES ELSEWHERE. REAL POWER LIES IN TAKING WHAT YOU WANT, IF ONLY BECAUSE YOU CAN.
WOULDN'T YOU AGREE, ZORIEN?
SHUT UP, FILTH!
THAT "POWER" YOU'RE RAMBLING ON ABOUT IS JUST A WAY OF DISGUISING WHAT A COWARD YOU ARE!
I'VE BEEN CALLED FAR WORSE BY FAR GREATER.
THAT'S ENOUGH. IT'S TIME YOU PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID, ELTOREQ.

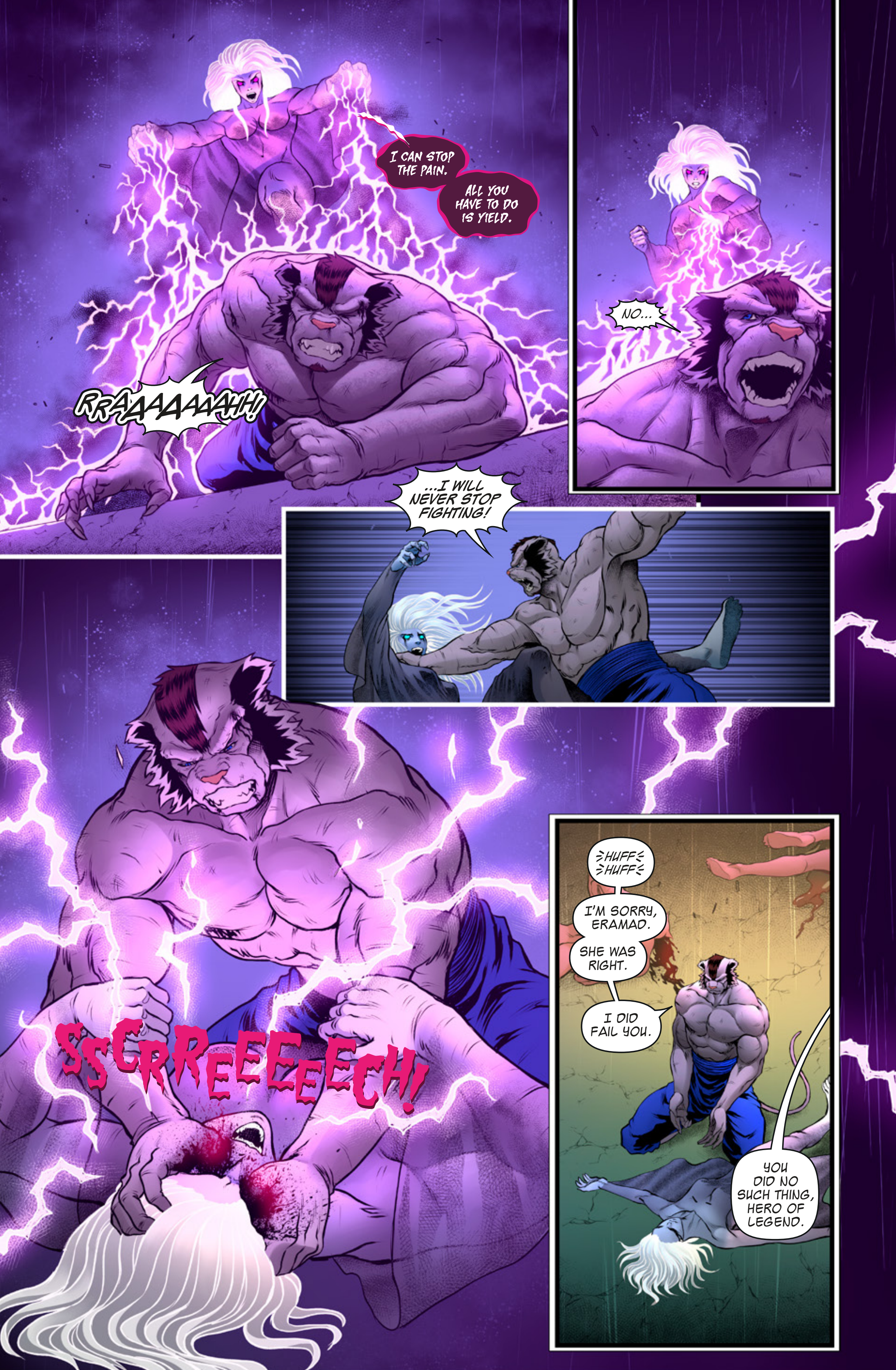

KELTHAN'S TRAINING HAS NOT BEEN EASY.
THOUGH HIS STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE ARE RETURNING.
WHEN HE IS NOT PUNISHING HIS BODY...
...HE IS MEDITATING EVERY NIGHT TO FIND HIS INNER PEACE.
HIS TRAINING ROUTINE MIGHT KILL ANY OTHER FELINE...
BUT KELTHAN IS DETERMINED.
DRIVEN TO PROVE TO HIMSELF THAT HE IS CAPABLE OF PROTECTING THE FELINES.

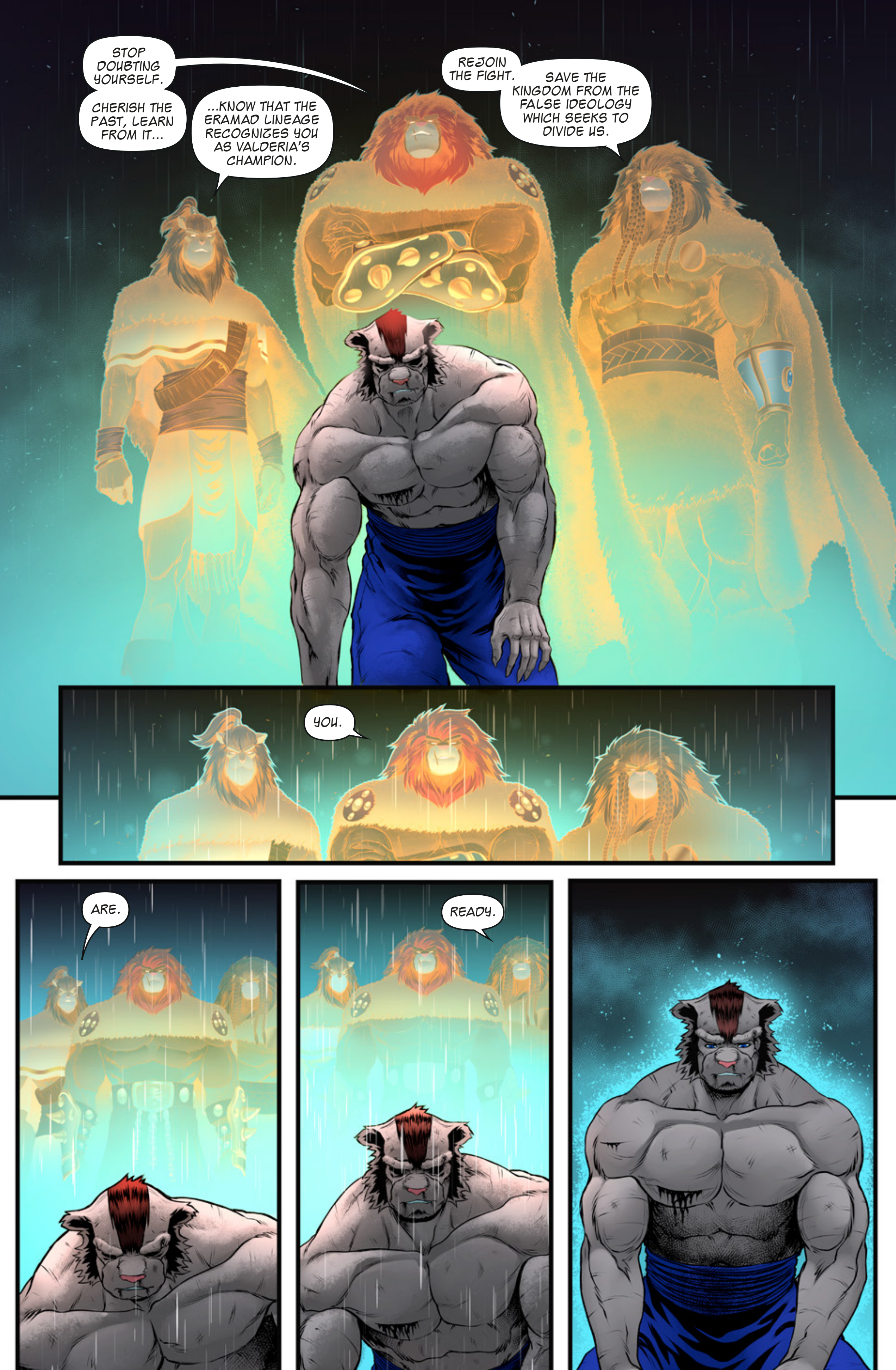

YOU HAVEN'T LOST A STEP, KELTHAN...
...BUT BEING A BATTLECAT IS NOT JUST ABOUT PHYSICAL PROWESS.
NO, IT'S ABOUT THE INTENTION WITHIN ONE'S HEART.
IT'S ABOUT DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.
IF YOU WISH TO PROVE YOURSELF, ENTER THE *PATHFINDER* AND REDISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE.
IN THE END, HOWEVER, IT IS UP TO YOU TO DECIDE WHO YOU WANT TO BE.
GO WITH GRACE, KELTHAN OF STORMHOLT.
MAY THE LION GOD GRANT YOU WHAT YOU SEEK.
THE PATHFINDER REQUIRES A FOCUSED MIND. A COMPLETE MASTERY OF YOUR OWN FLESH.
AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE VERY BLOOD THAT RUNS THROUGH YOUR VEINS.

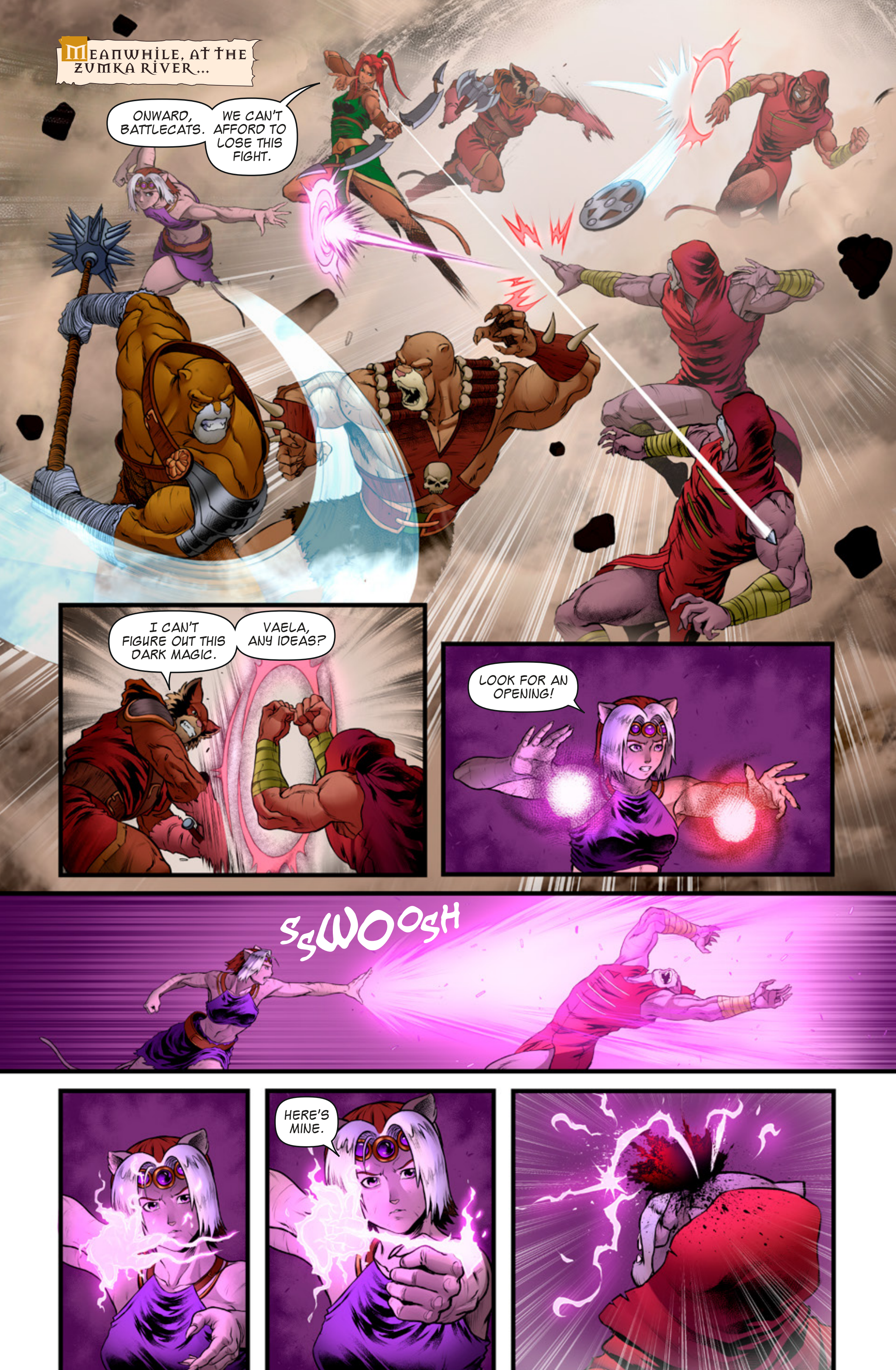

IF KELTHAN WANTS TO SUCCEED, HE MUST REMEMBER HIS PAST, BUT NOT DWELL ON IT.
HE MUST REALIZE HIS STRENGTH, BUT NOT RELY ON IT.
HE WILL HAVE TO FACE THE TRUTH AND COME TO TERMS WITH WHO HE TRULY IS.
A LONG TIME AGO, YOU MADE A PROMISE TO YOUR KING.
AND YOU KEPT IT BY DEFEATING THE NOCT MAIDEN.
AN ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU HAVE STRUGGLED TO LIVE UP TO EVERY DAY SINCE.
WE WILL RELEASE YOU OF THAT BURDEN.
TODAY YOU DIE, HERO OF LEGEND.

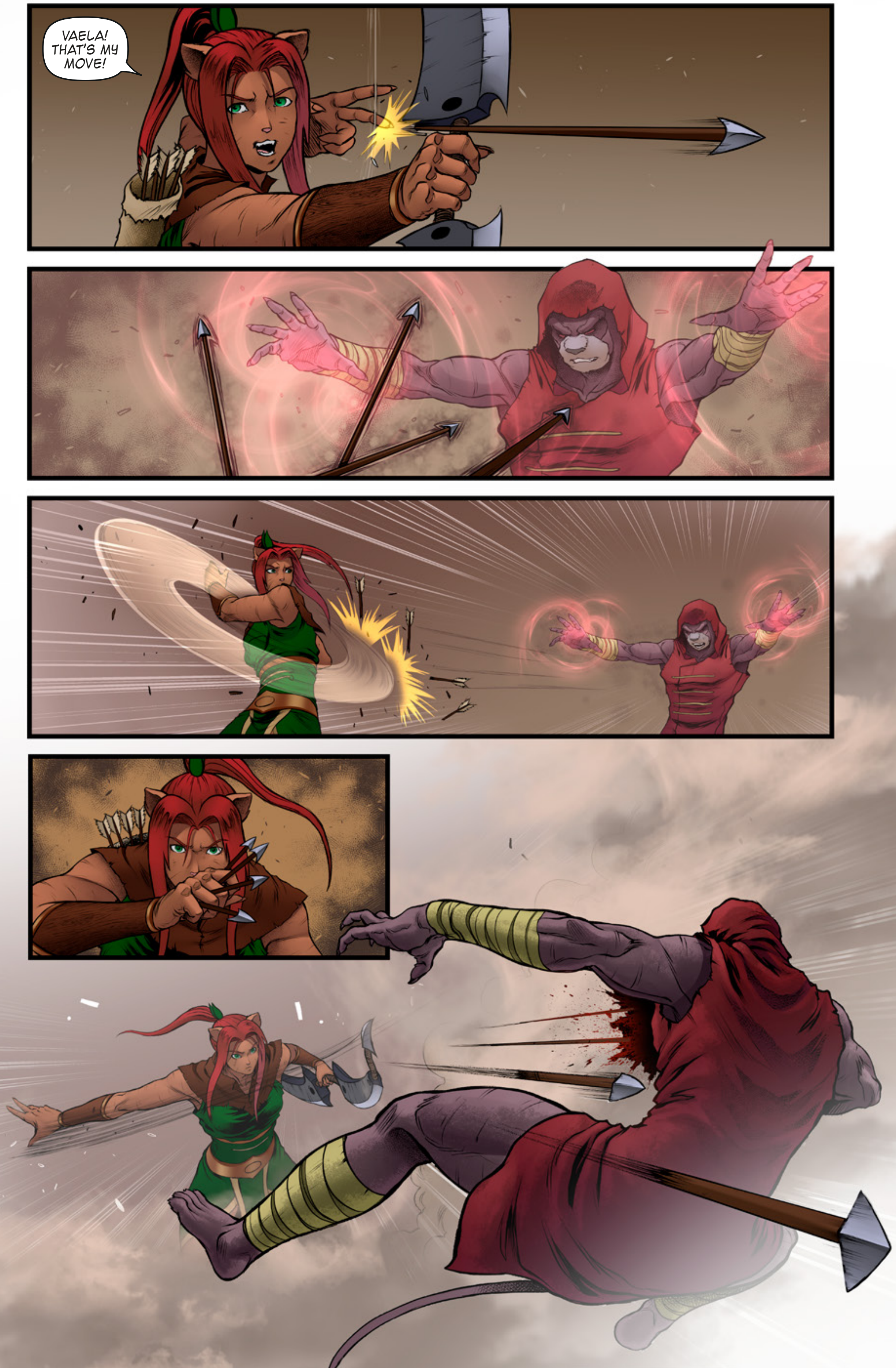

TWO ERAMADS DIED ON YOUR WATCH.
HOW DISAPPOINTING.
SLASH
MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR FATE AS A FAILURE, KELTHAN OF STORMHOLT.
OOF
ARGHH
I WILL NOT LET YOUR DECEPTION AFFECT ME ANY LONGER!
THIS IS NOT MY FATE!
SLAAAASH

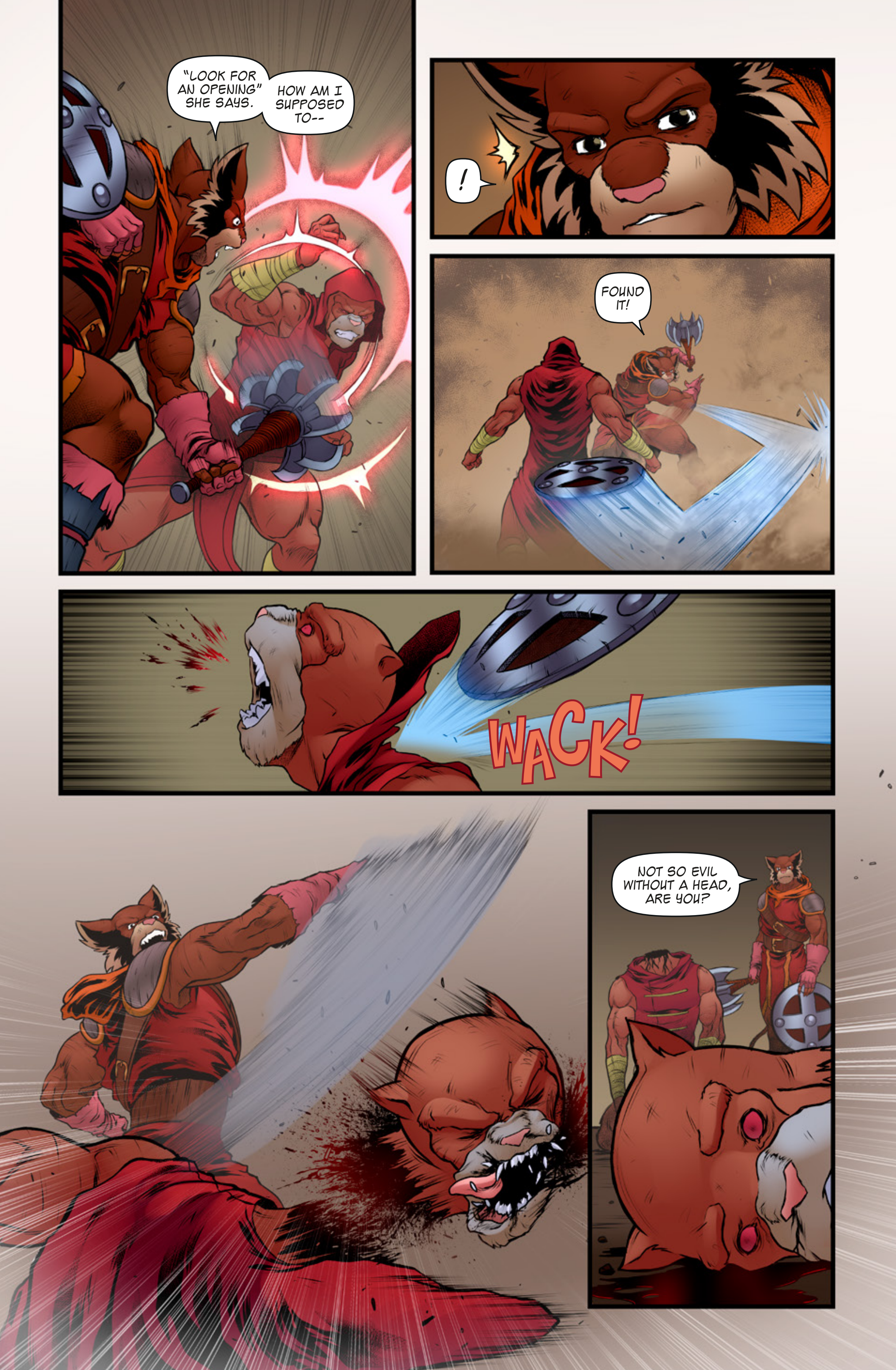

FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION!
THUK
ARGGG!!
RAHHH!
TZZZZZZ

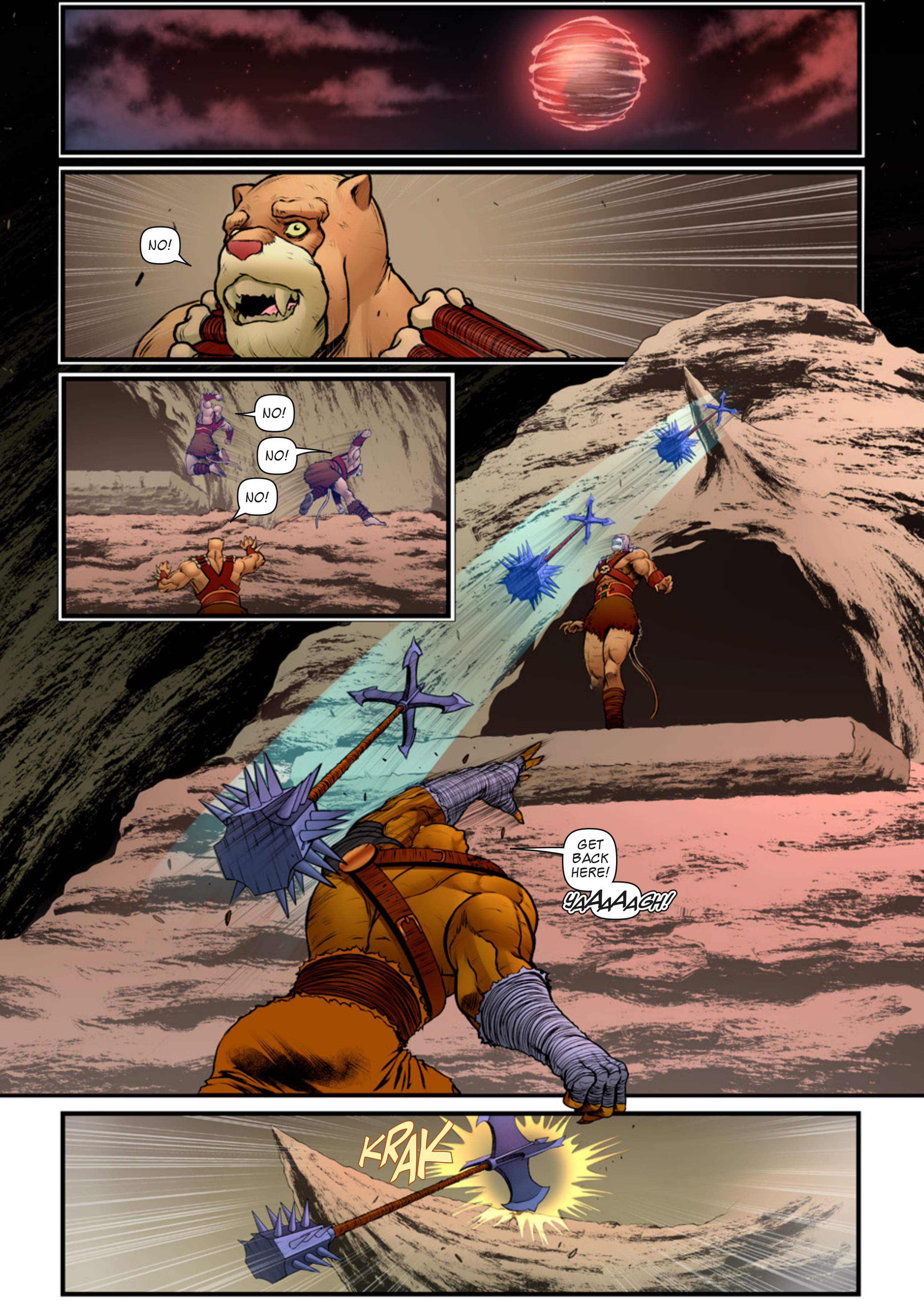

I CAN STOP THE PAIN.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS YIELD.
RRAAAAAAAHH!
NO...
...I WILL NEVER STOP FIGHTING!
SSCRREEEEEECH!
HUFF HUFF
I'M SORRY, ERAMAD.
SHE WAS RIGHT.
I DID FAIL YOU.
YOU DID NO SUCH THING, HERO OF LEGEND.

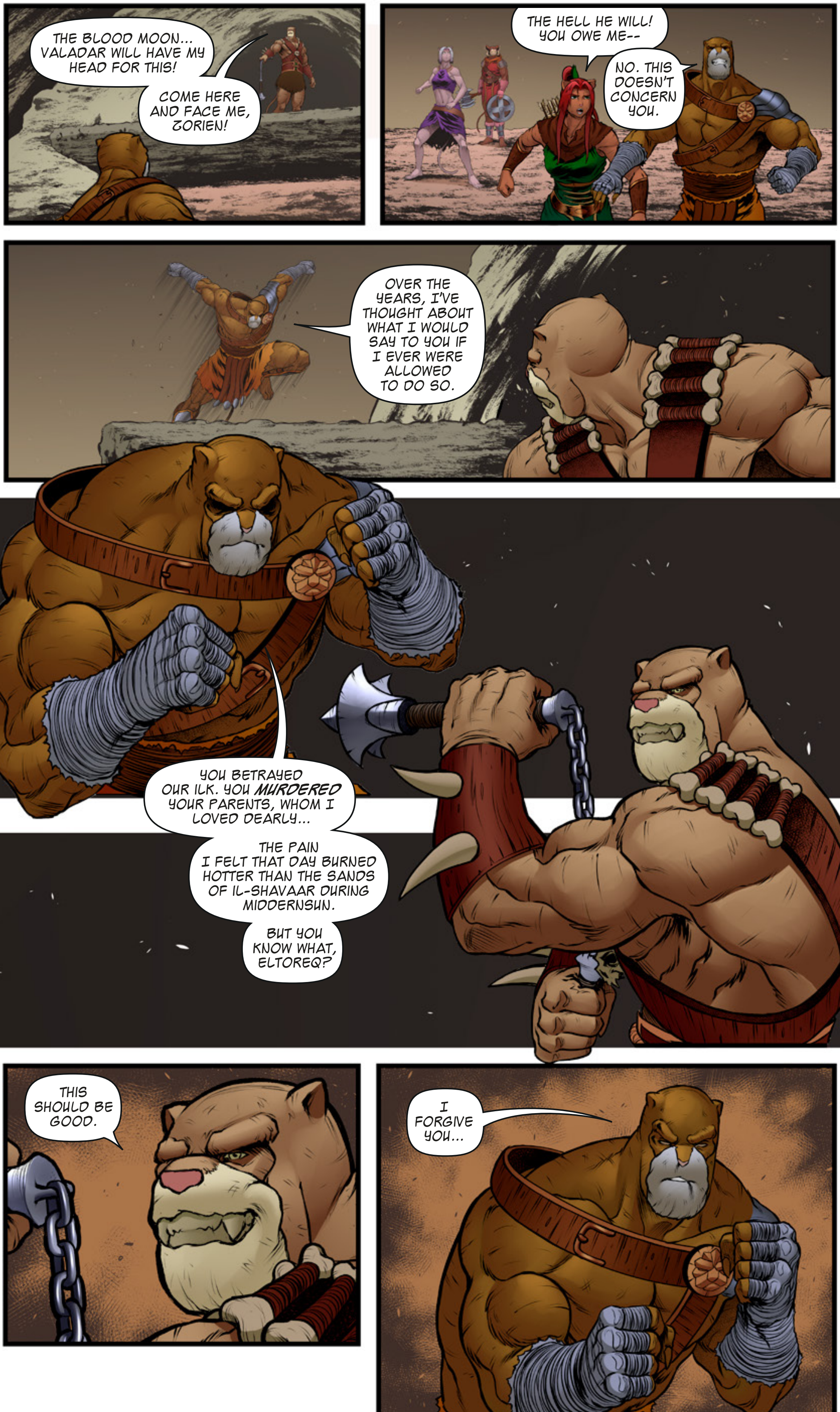

STOP DOUBTING YOURSELF.
CHERISH THE PAST, LEARN FROM IT...
...KNOW THAT THE ERAMAD LINEAGE RECOGNIZES YOU AS VALDERIA'S CHAMPION.
REJOIN THE FIGHT.
SAVE THE KINGDOM FROM THE FALSE IDEOLOGY WHICH SEEKS TO DIVIDE US.
YOU.
ARE.
READY.

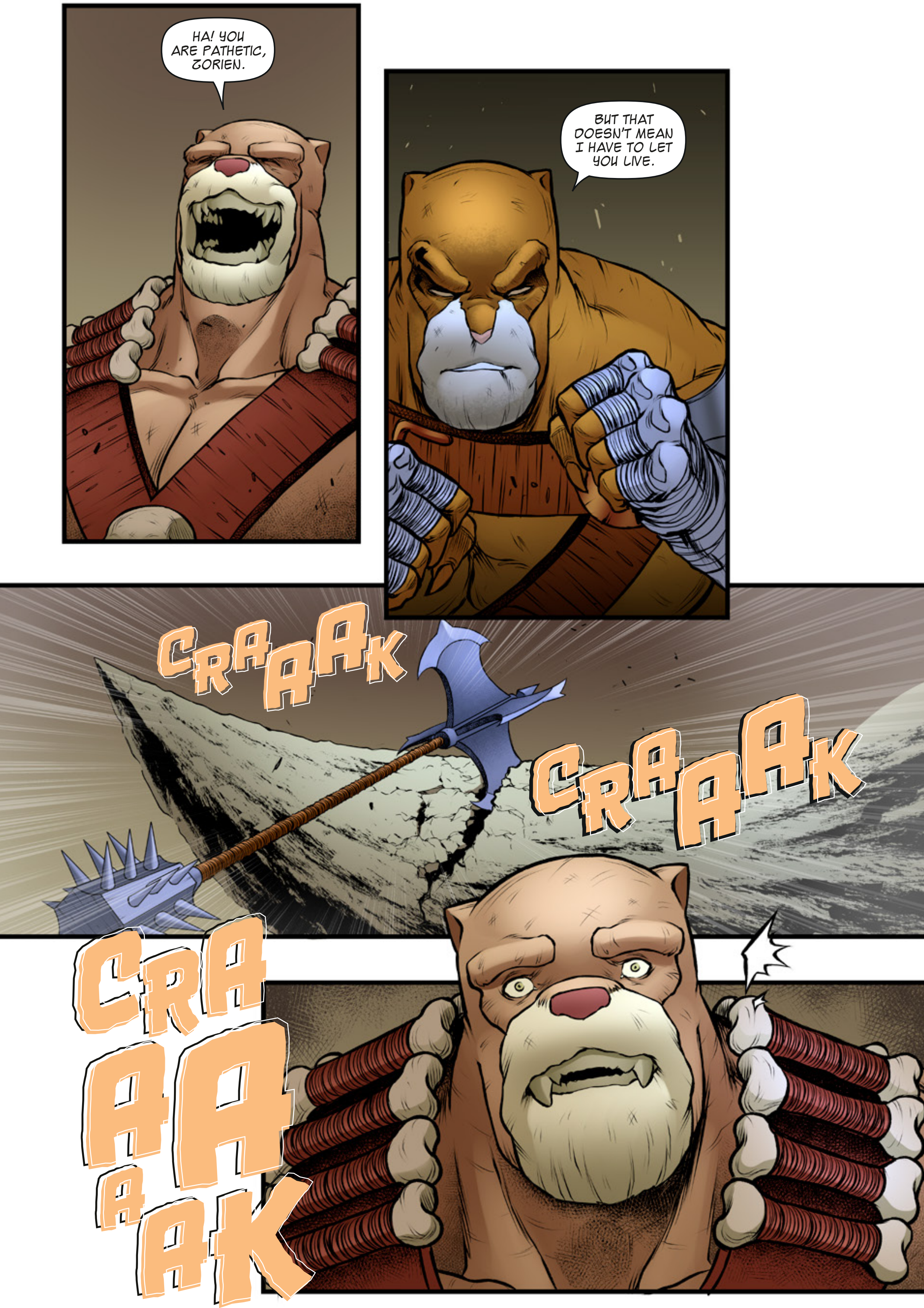

MEANWHILE, AT THE ZUMKA RIVER...
ONWARD, BATTLECATS.
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE THIS FIGHT.
I CAN'T FIGURE OUT THIS DARK MAGIC.
VAELA, ANY IDEAS?
LOOK FOR AN OPENING!
SSWOOOSH
HERE'S MINE.

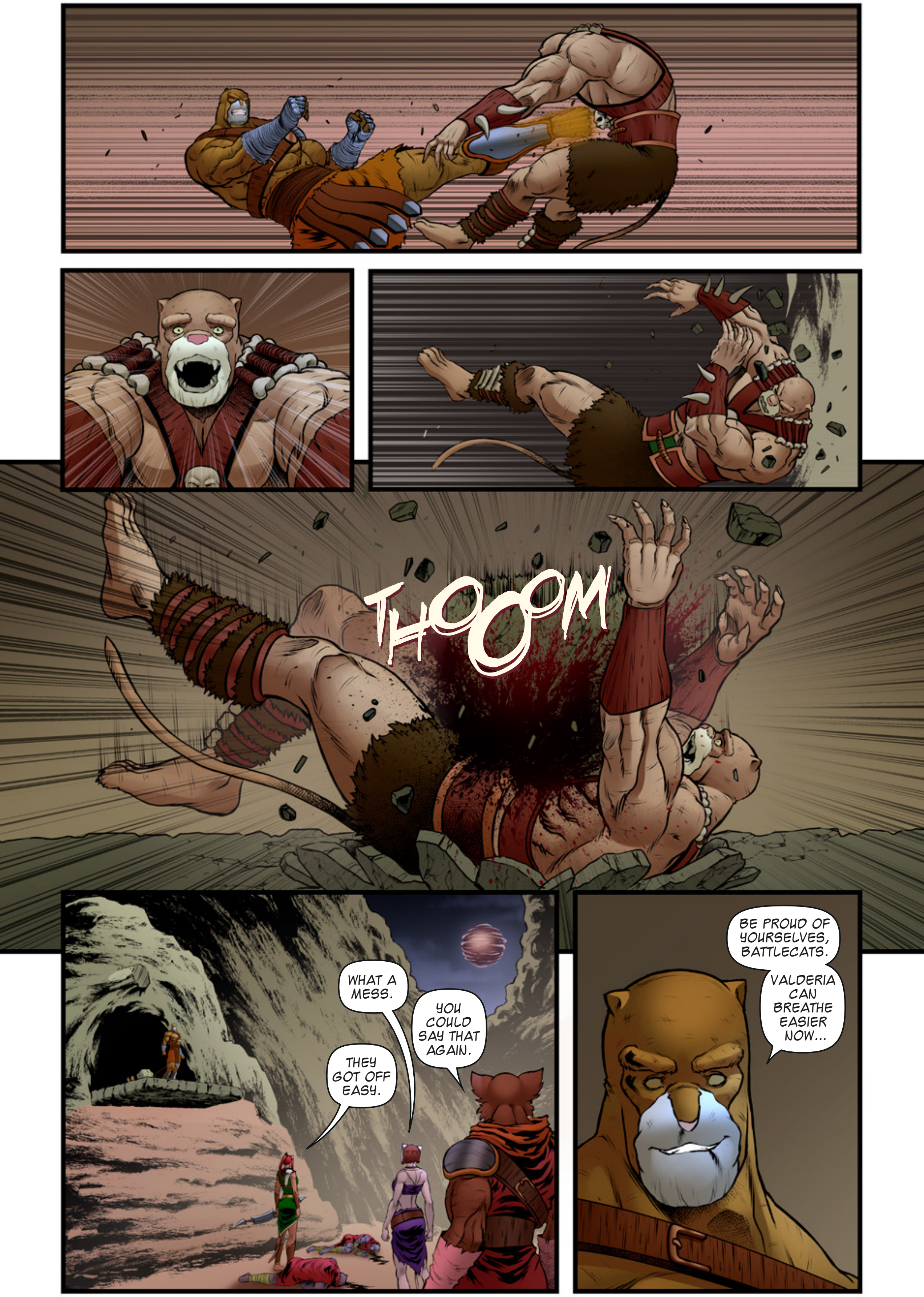

VAELA! THAT'S MY MOVE!

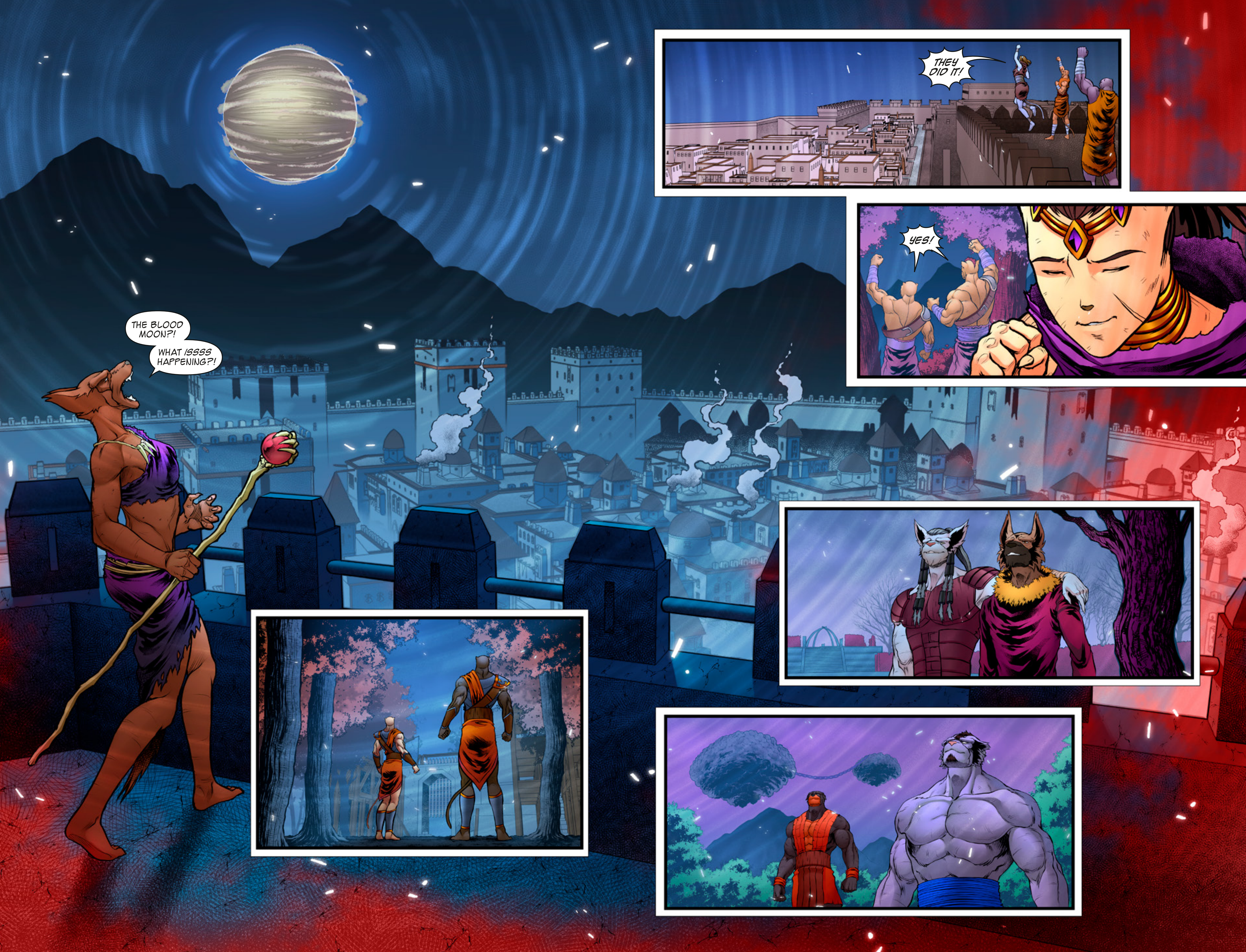

"LOOK FOR AN OPENING" SHE SAYS.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO--
!
FOUND IT!
WACK!
NOT SO EVIL WITHOUT A HEAD, ARE YOU?

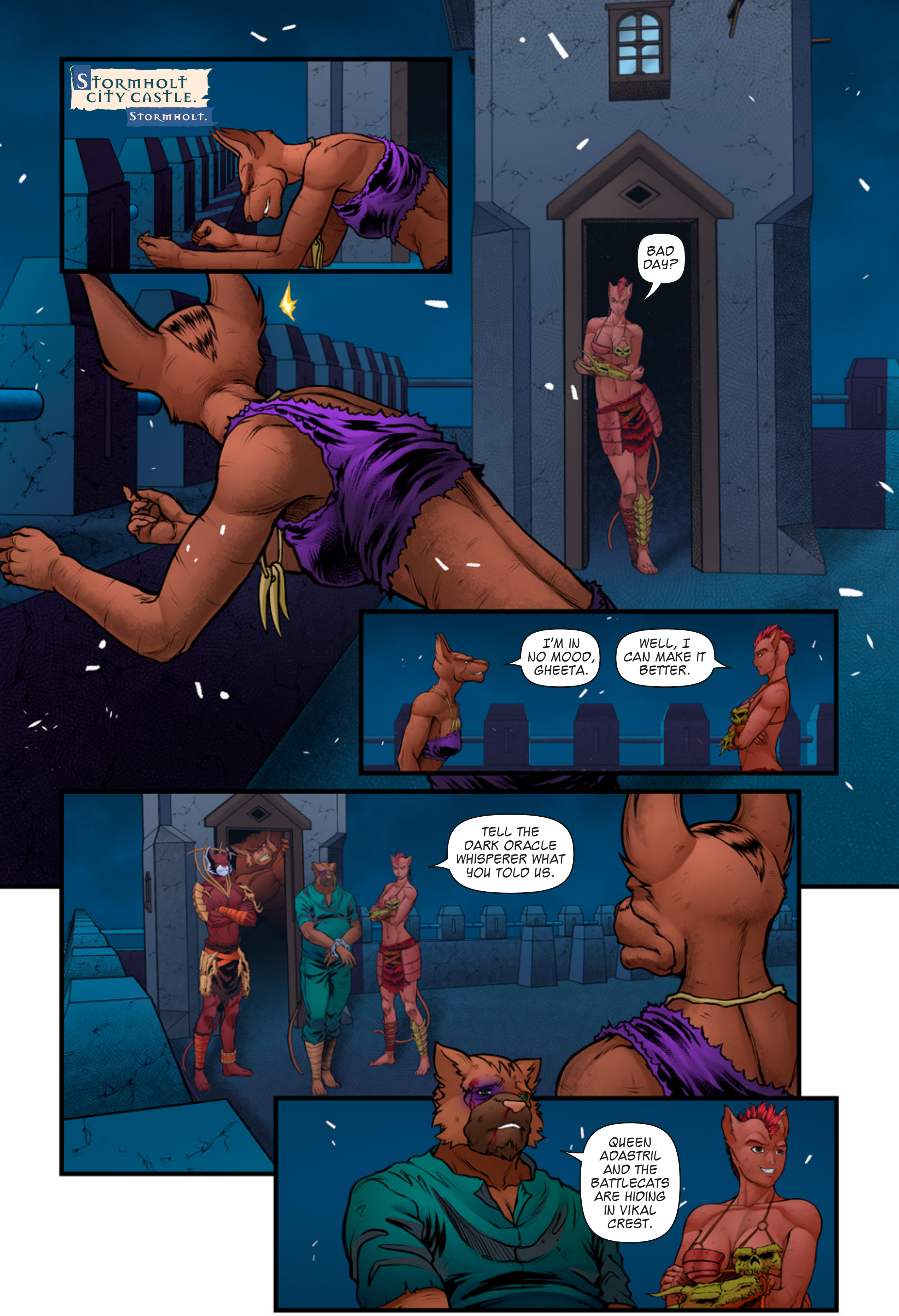

NO!
NO!
NO!
NO!
GET BACK HERE!
YAAAAAGH!
KRAK


THE BLOOD MOON... VALADAR WILL HAVE MY HEAD FOR THIS!
COME HERE AND FACE ME, ZORIEN!
THE HELL HE WILL! YOU OWE ME--
NO. THIS DOESN'T CONCERN YOU.
OVER THE YEARS, I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT I WOULD SAY TO YOU IF I EVER WERE ALLOWED TO DO SO.
YOU BETRAYED OUR ILK. YOU *MURDERED* YOUR PARENTS, WHOM I LOVED DEARLY...
THE PAIN I FELT THAT DAY BURNED HOTTER THAN THE SANDS OF IL-SHAVAAR DURING MIDDERNSUN.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT, ELTOREQ?
THIS SHOULD BE GOOD.
I FORGIVE YOU...


HA! YOU ARE PATHETIC, ZORIEN.
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I HAVE TO LET YOU LIVE.
CRAAAK
CRAAAK
CRAAAAAK


THOOOM
WHAT A MESS.
YOU COULD SAY THAT AGAIN.
THEY GOT OFF EASY.
BE PROUD OF YOURSELVES, BATTLECATS.
VALDERIA CAN BREATHE EASIER NOW...

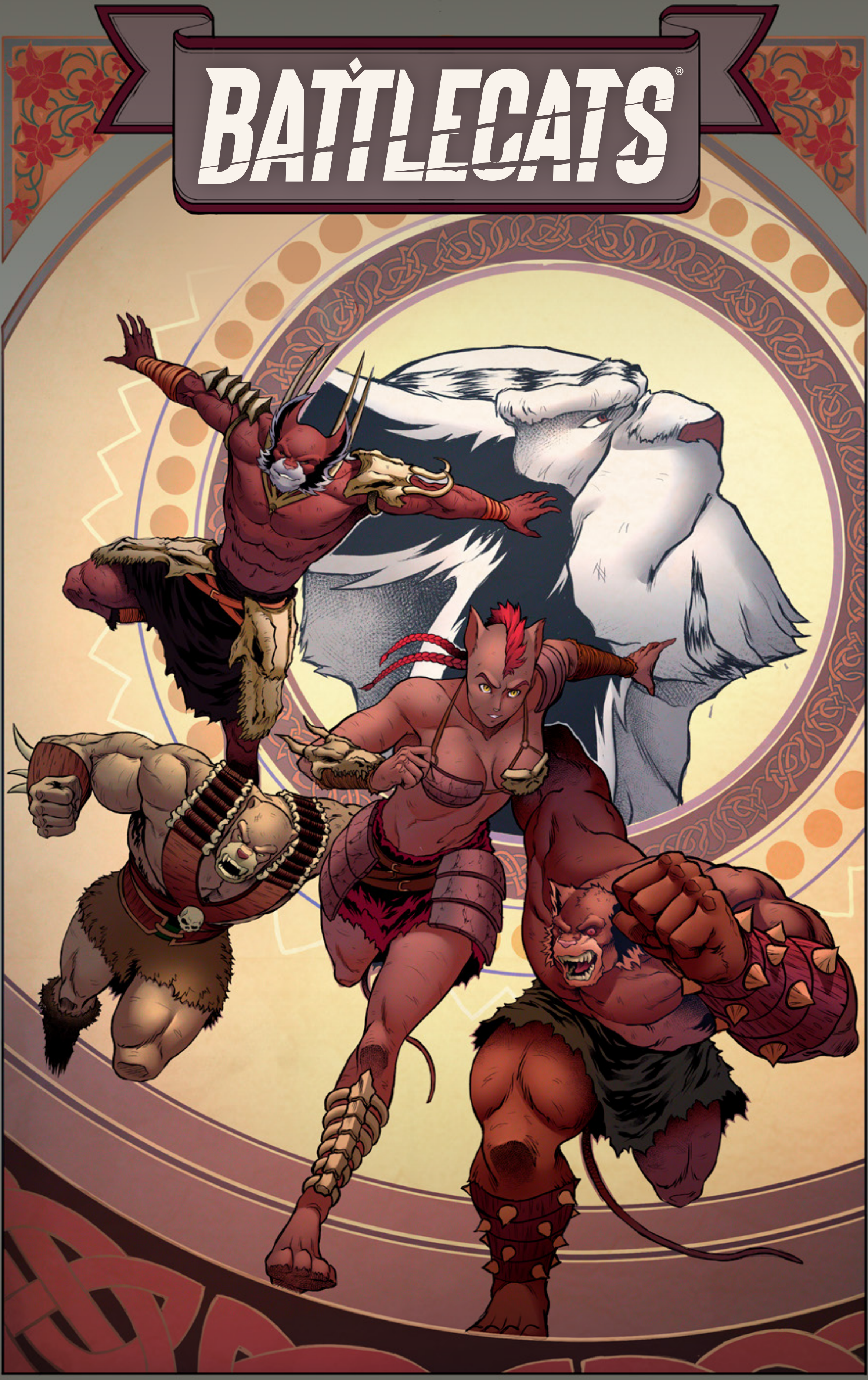

THE BLOOD MOON?!
WHAT ISSSS HAPPENING?!
THEY DID IT!
YES!

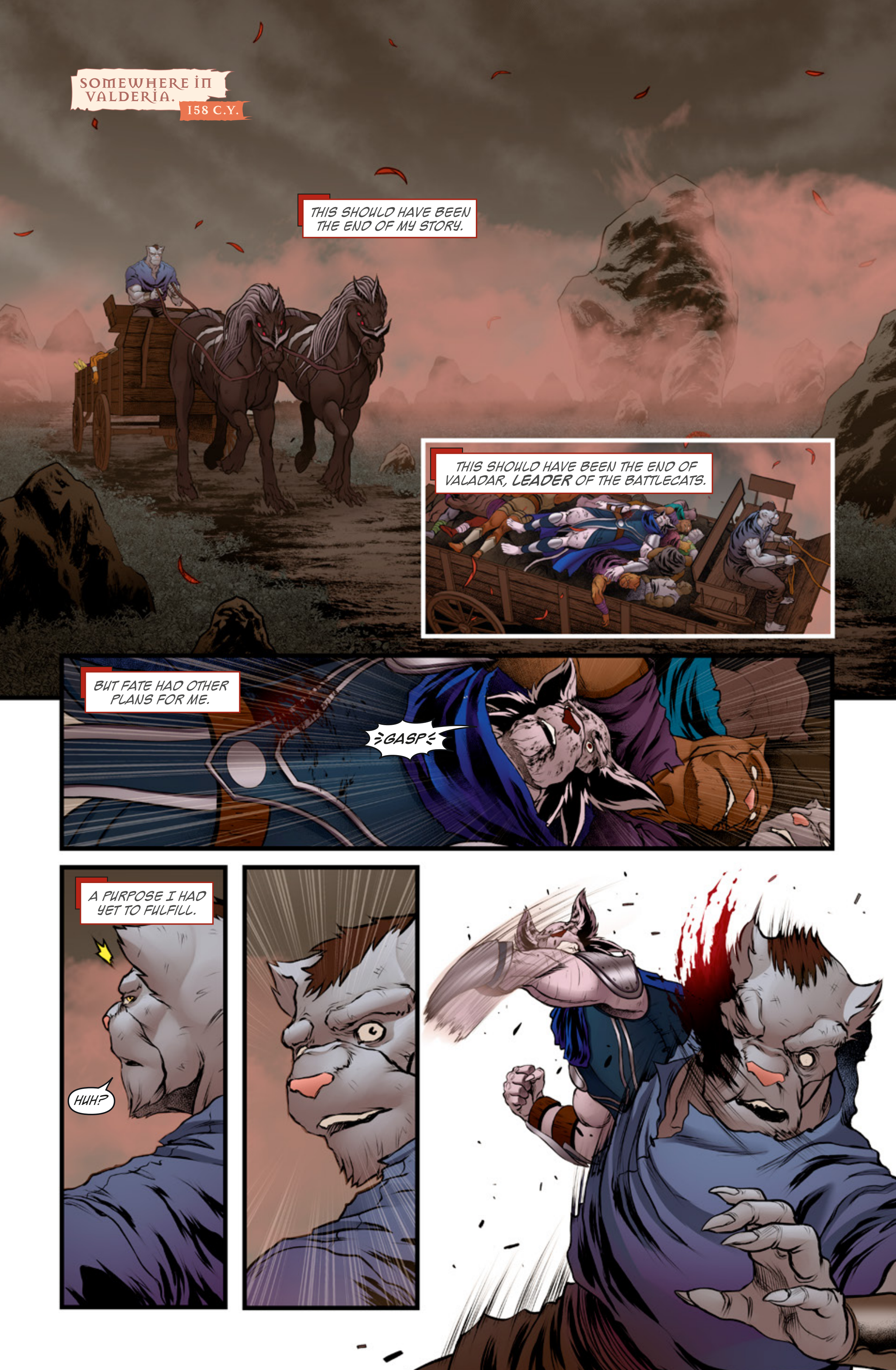

Stormholt City Castle.
Stormholt.
BAD DAY?
I'M IN NO MOOD, GHEETA.
WELL, I CAN MAKE IT BETTER.
TELL THE DARK ORACLE WHISPERER WHAT YOU TOLD US.
QUEEN ADASTRIL AND THE BATTLECATS ARE HIDING IN VIKAL CREST.

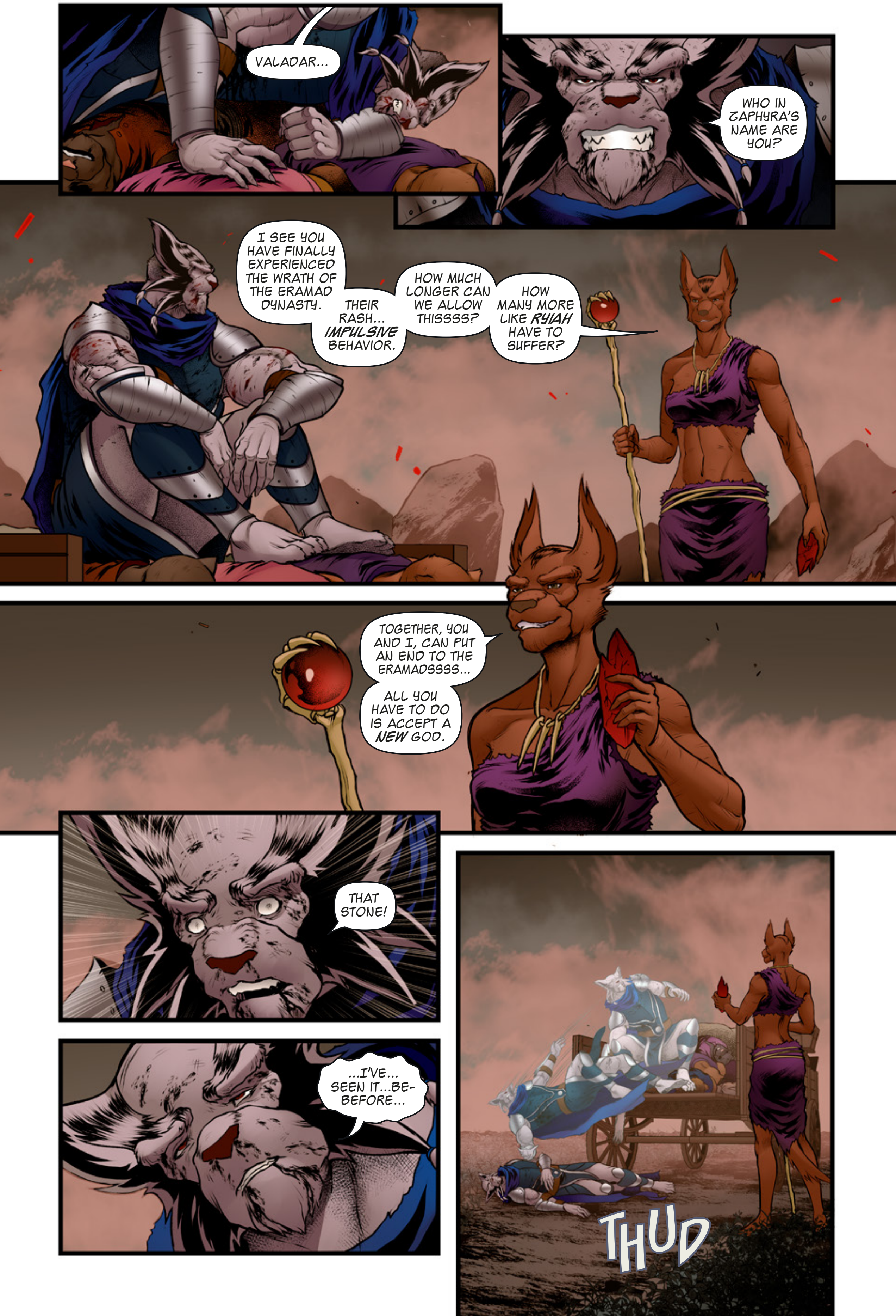
A TRAP IS LAID

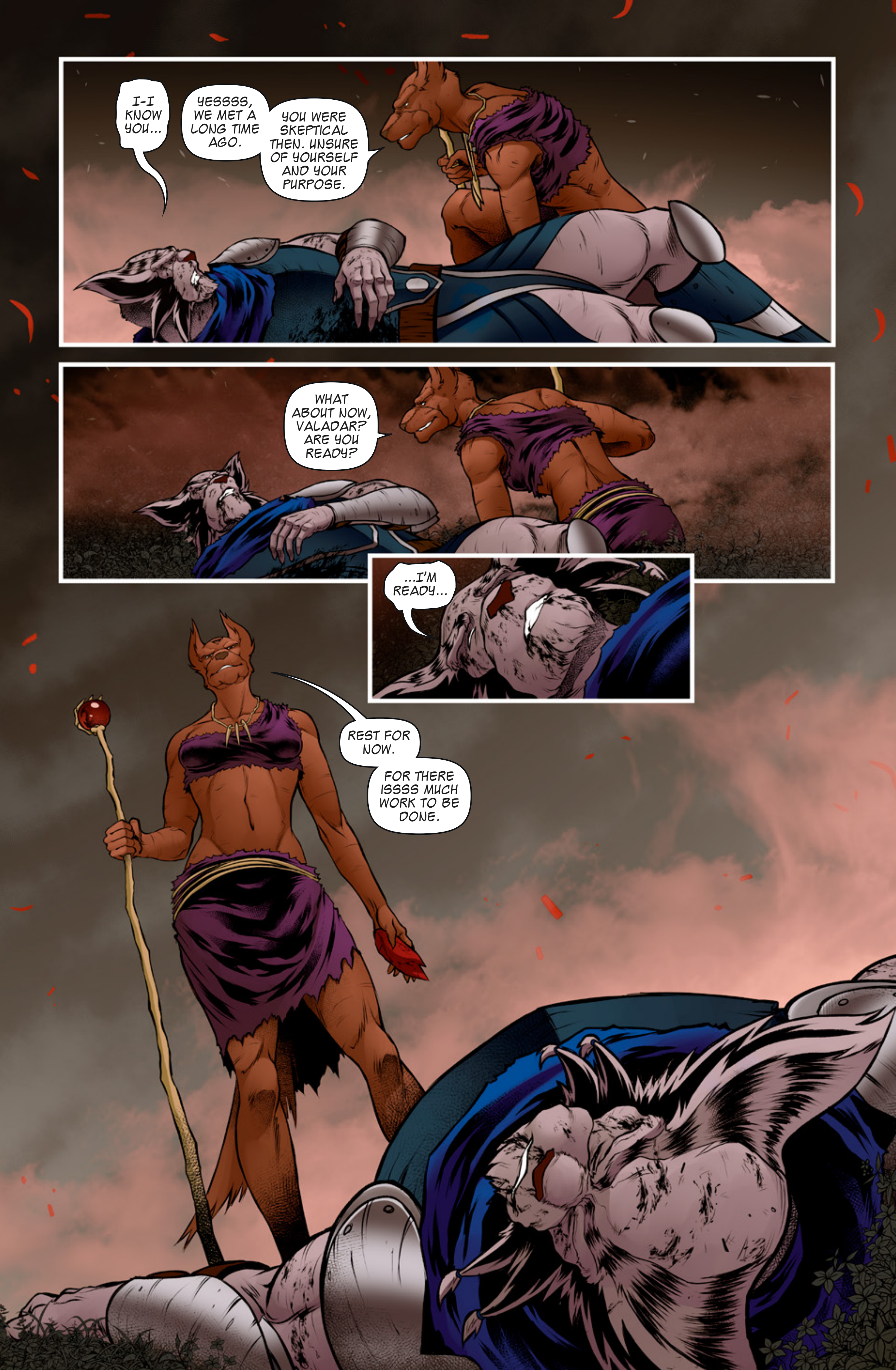
5

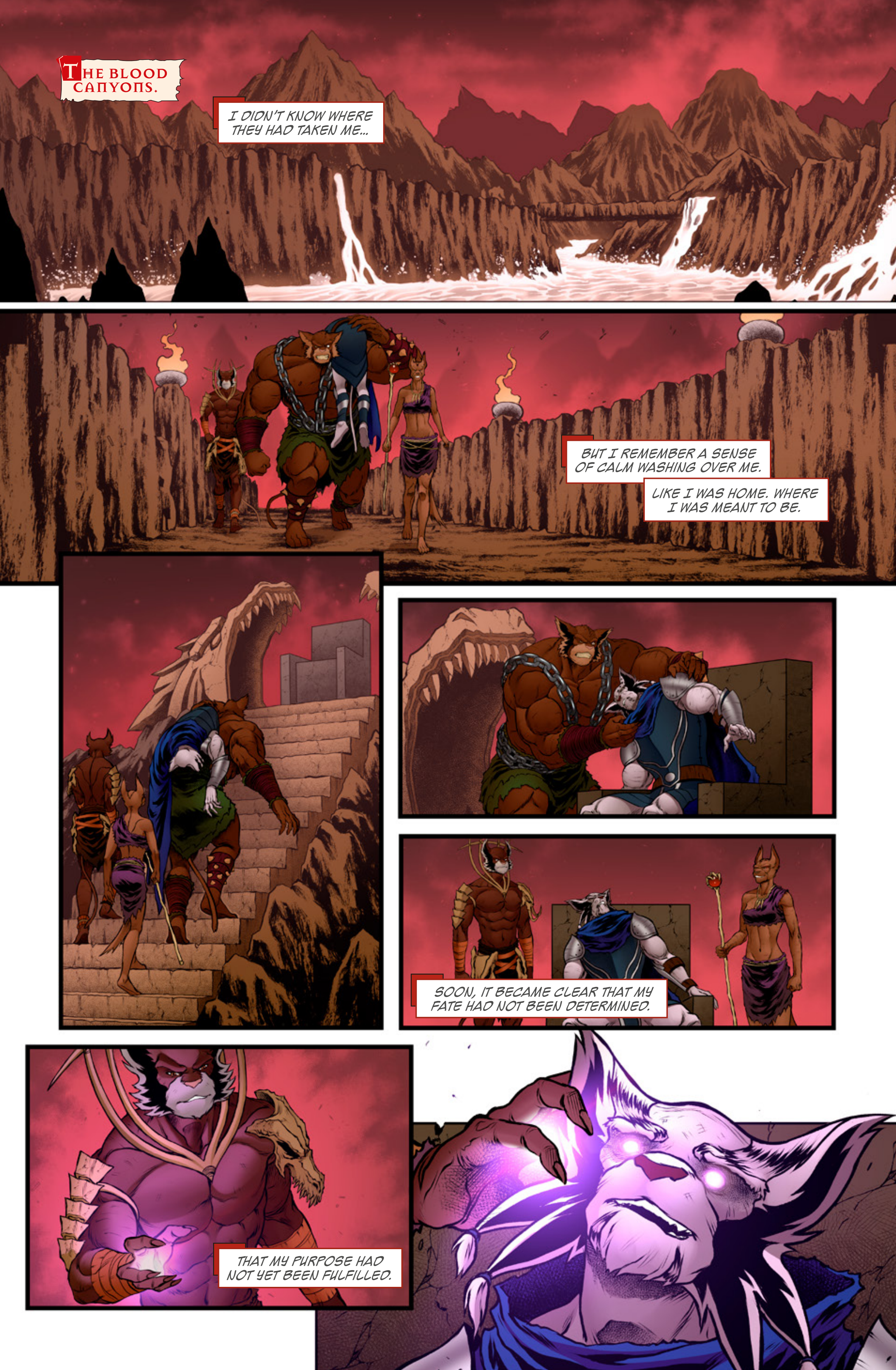
Chapter Five

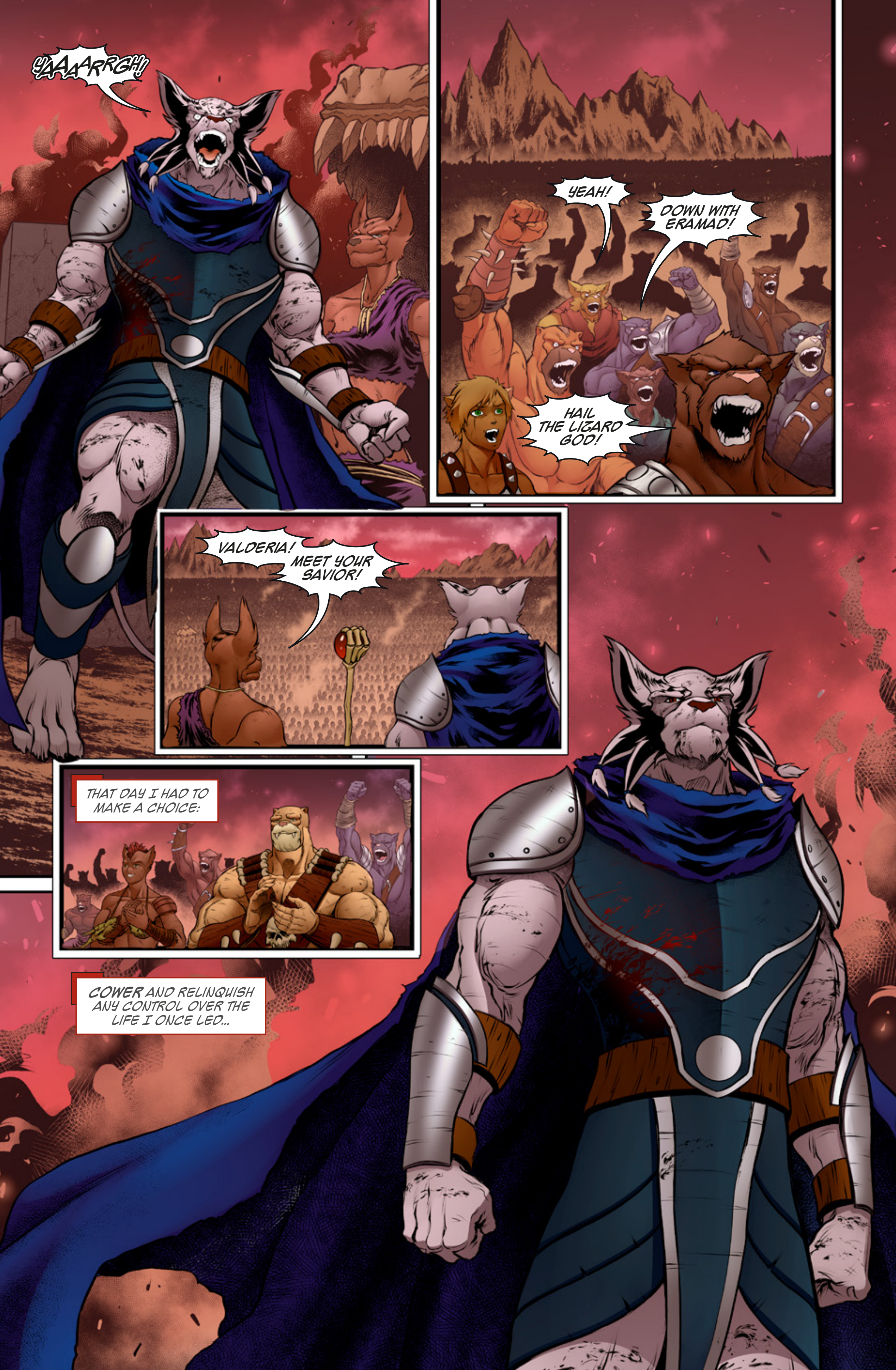

BATTLECATS®

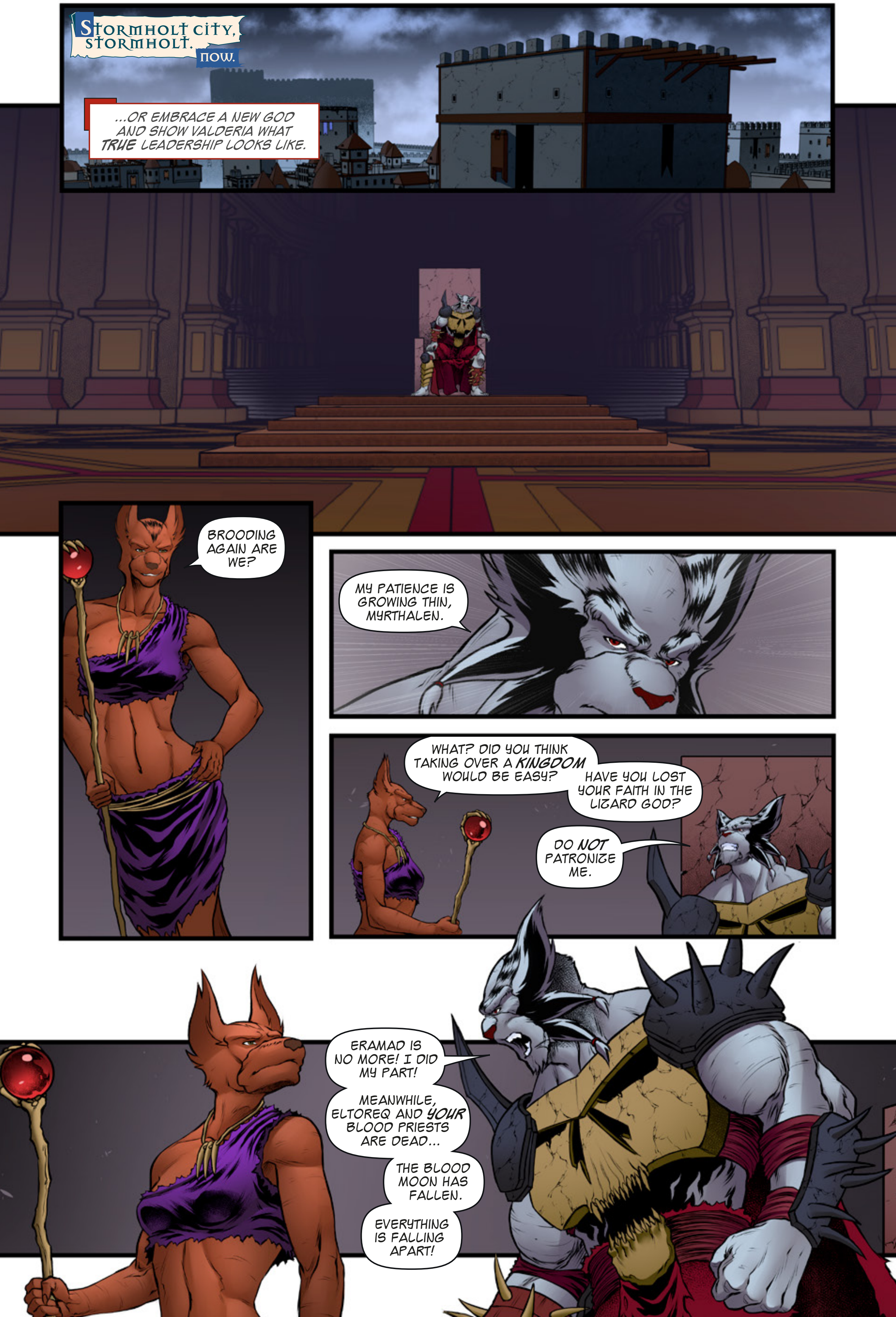

SOMEWHERE IN VALDERIA.
158 C.Y.
THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE END OF MY STORY.
THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE END OF VALADAR, **LEADER** OF THE BATTLECATS.
BUT FATE HAD OTHER PLANS FOR ME.
GASP
A PURPOSE I HAD YET TO FULFILL.
HUH?

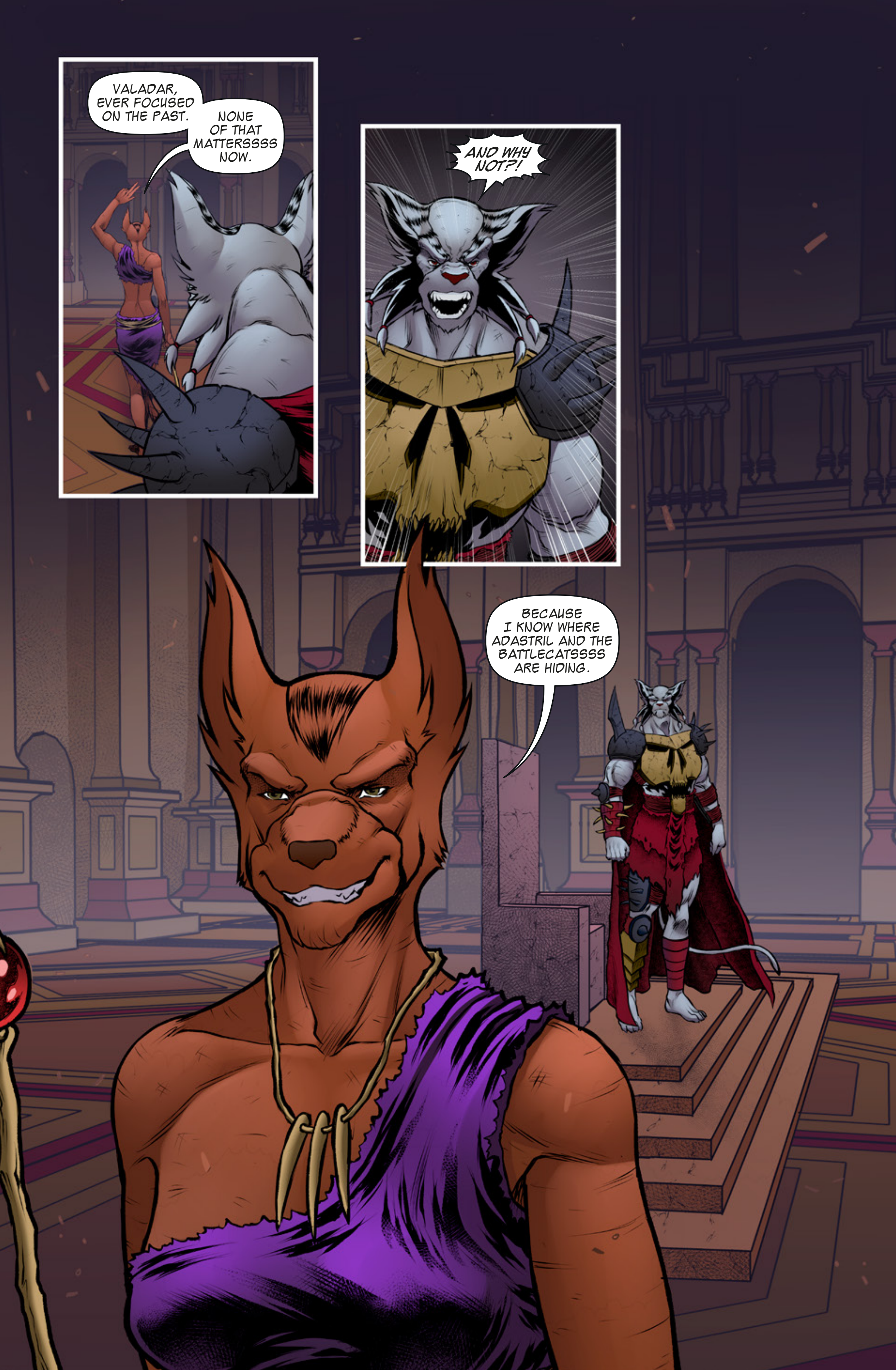

VALADAR...
WHO IN ZAPHYRA'S NAME ARE YOU?
I SEE YOU HAVE FINALLY EXPERIENCED THE WRATH OF THE ERAMAD DYNASTY.
THEIR RASH... *IMPULSIVE* BEHAVIOR.
HOW MUCH LONGER CAN WE ALLOW THISSSS?
HOW MANY MORE LIKE *RYIAH* HAVE TO SUFFER?
TOGETHER, YOU AND I, CAN PUT AN END TO THE ERAMADSSSS...
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ACCEPT A *NEW* GOD.
THAT STONE!
...I'VE... SEEN IT...BE-BEFORE...
THUD

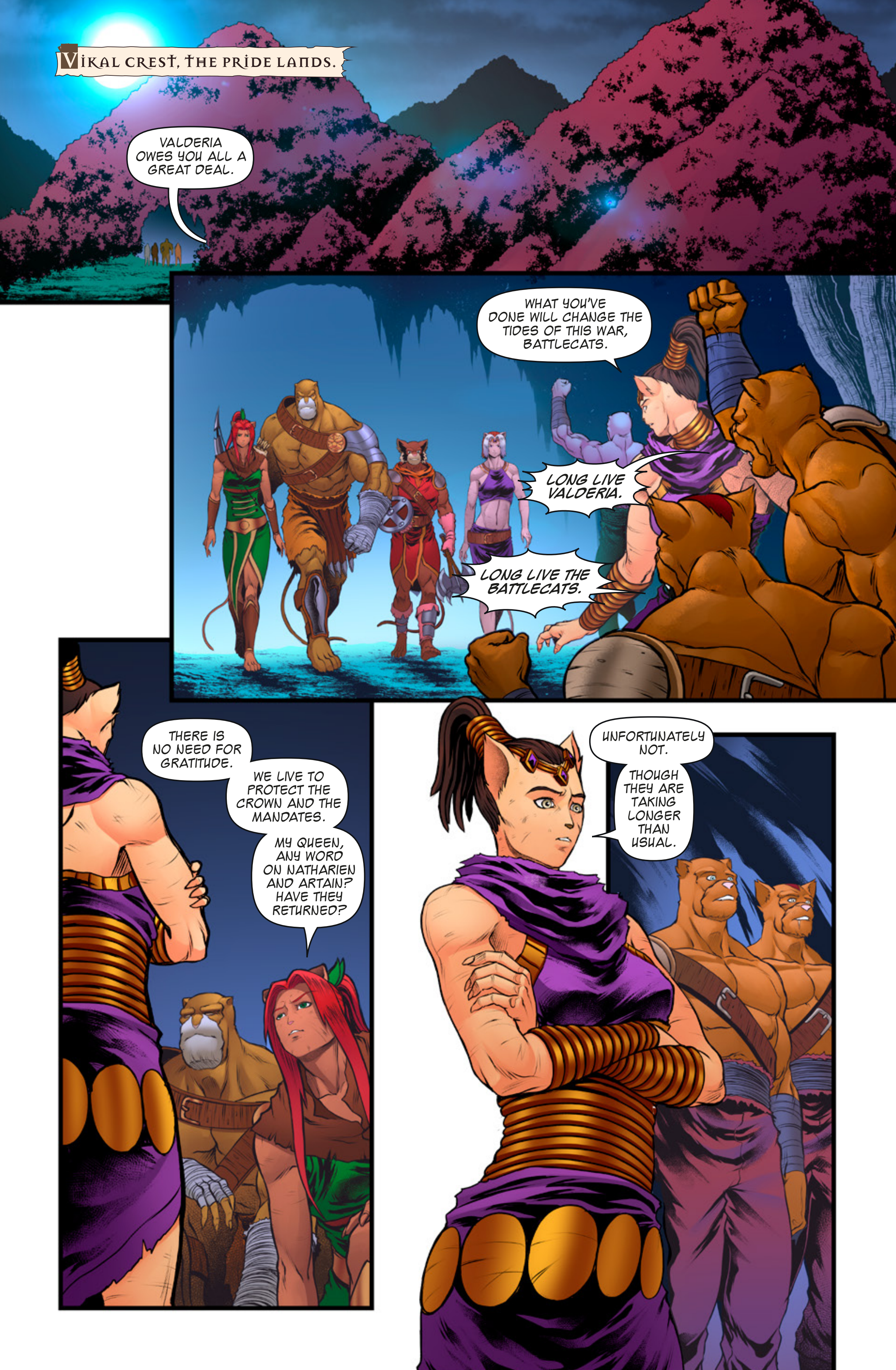

I-I KNOW YOU...
YESSSS, WE MET A LONG TIME AGO.
YOU WERE SKEPTICAL THEN. UNSURE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR PURPOSE.
WHAT ABOUT NOW, VALADAR? ARE YOU READY?
...I'M READY...
REST FOR NOW.
FOR THERE ISSSS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE.

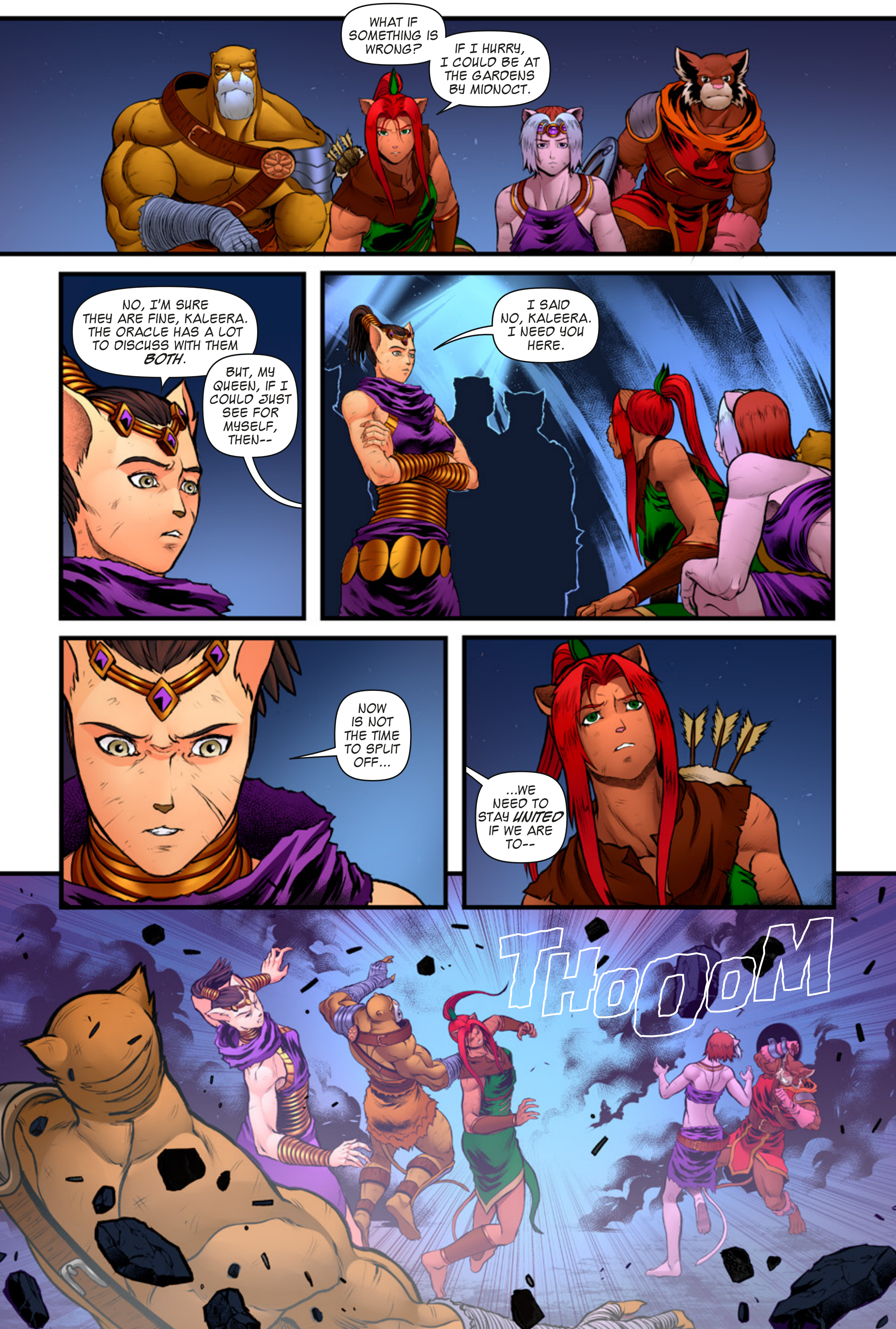

THE BLOOD CANYONS.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE THEY HAD TAKEN ME...
BUT I REMEMBER A SENSE OF CALM WASHING OVER ME.
LIKE I WAS HOME. WHERE I WAS MEANT TO BE.
SOON, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT MY FATE HAD NOT BEEN DETERMINED.
THAT MY PURPOSE HAD NOT YET BEEN FULFILLED.

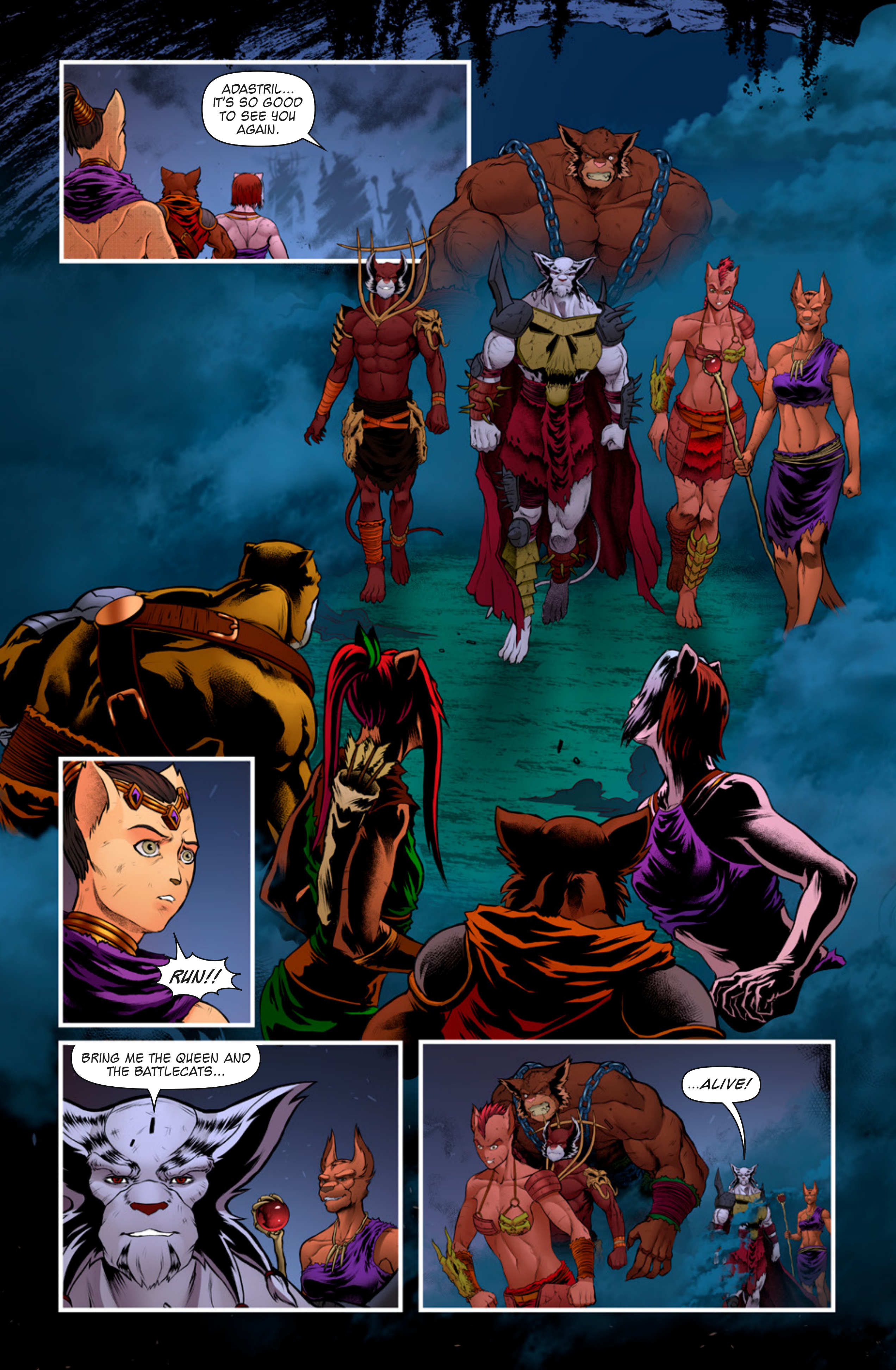

YAAAARRGH!
YEAH!
DOWN WITH ERAMAD!
HAIL THE LIZARD GOD!
VALDERIA!
MEET YOUR SAVIOR!
THAT DAY I HAD TO MAKE A CHOICE:
COWER AND RELINQUISH ANY CONTROL OVER THE LIFE I ONCE LED...

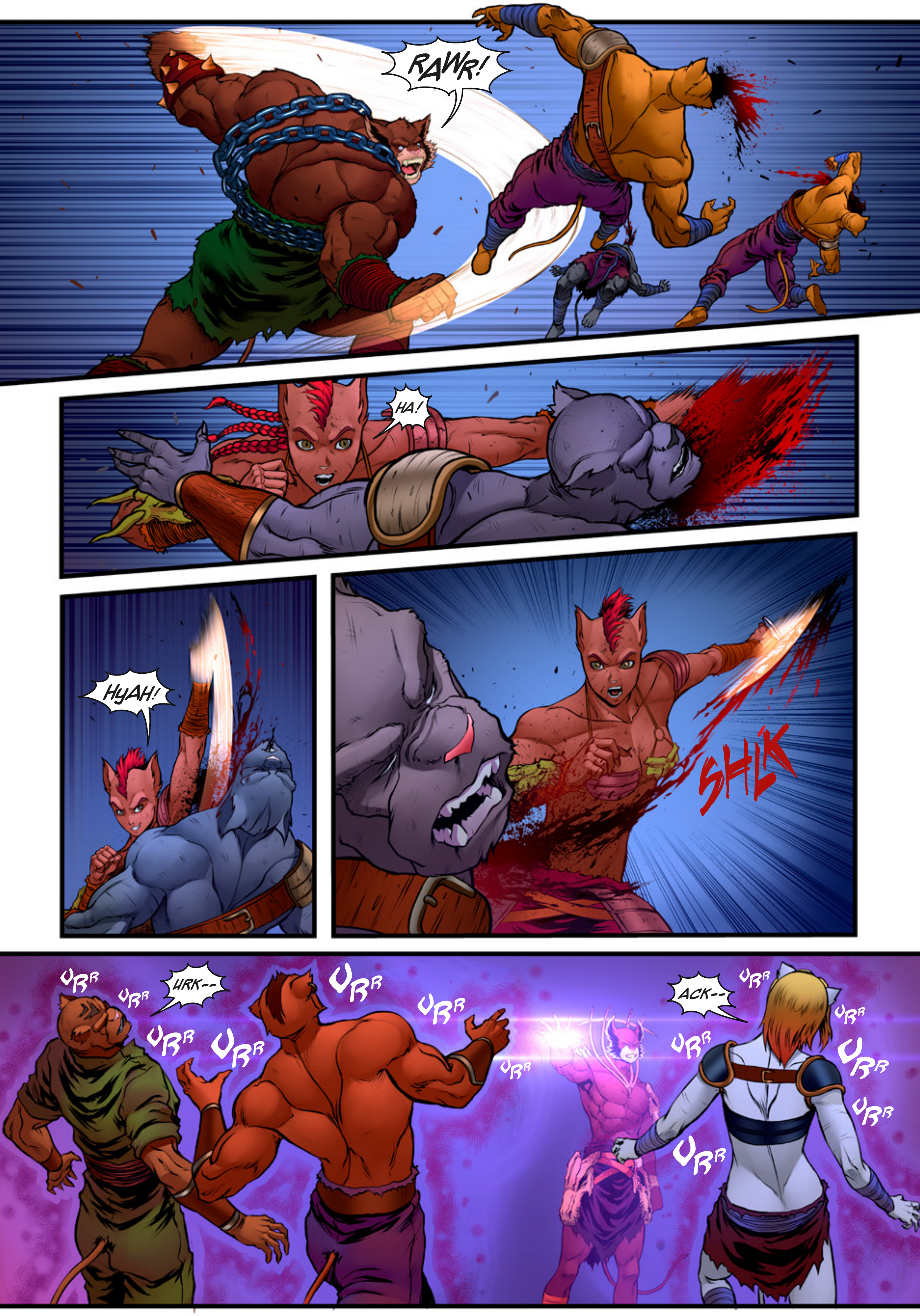

STORMHOLT CITY, STORMHOLT.
NOW.
...OR EMBRACE A NEW GOD AND SHOW VALDERIA WHAT *TRUE* LEADERSHIP LOOKS LIKE.
BROODING AGAIN ARE WE?
MY PATIENCE IS GROWING THIN, MYRTHALEN.
WHAT? DID YOU THINK TAKING OVER A *KINGDOM* WOULD BE EASY?
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR FAITH IN THE LIZARD GOD?
DO *NOT* PATRONIZE ME.
ERAMAD IS NO MORE! I DID MY PART!
MEANWHILE, ELTOREQ AND *YOUR* BLOOD PRIESTS ARE DEAD...
THE BLOOD MOON HAS FALLEN.
EVERYTHING IS FALLING APART!

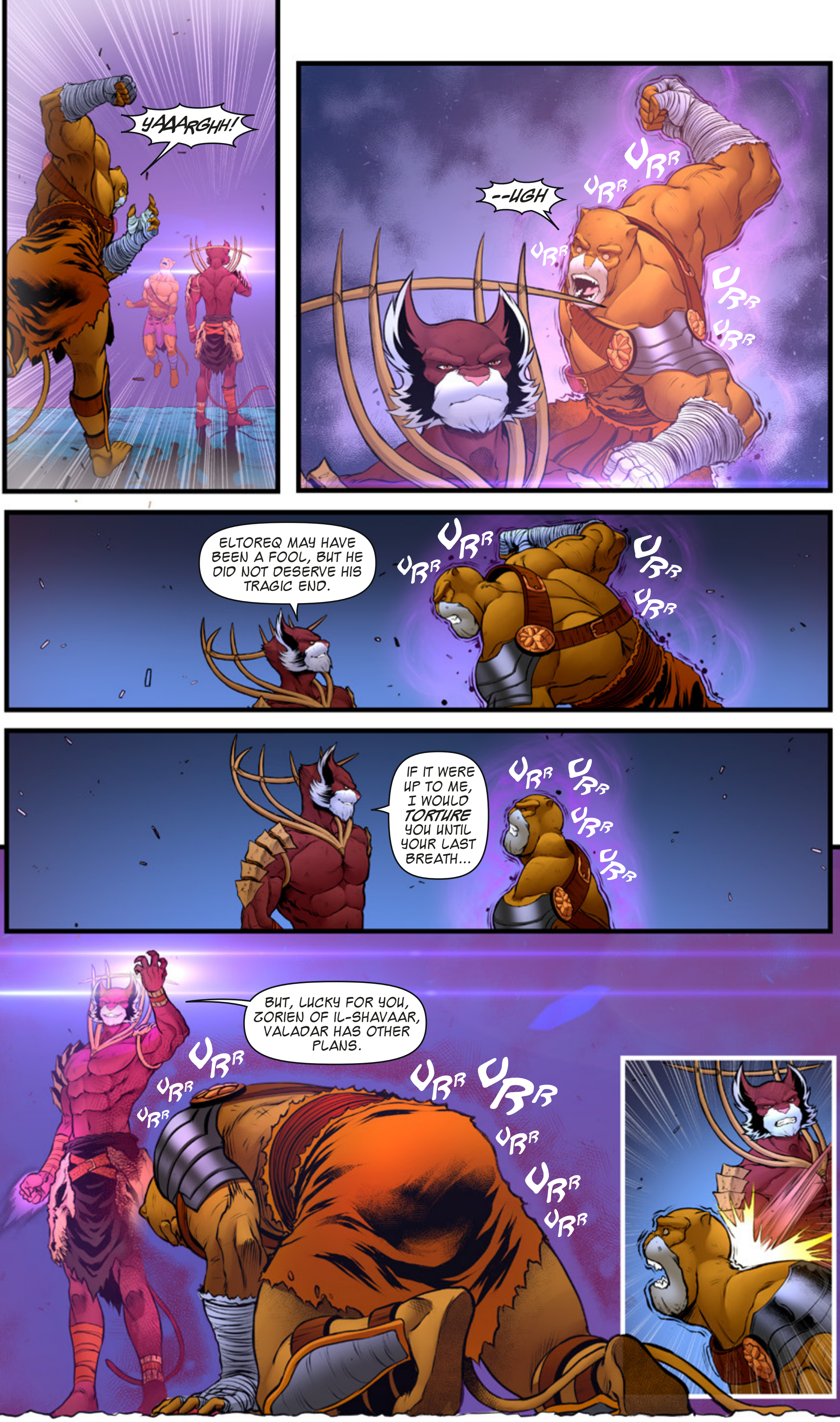

VALADAR, EVER FOCUSED ON THE PAST.
NONE OF THAT MATTERSSSS NOW.
AND WHY NOT?!
BECAUSE I KNOW WHERE ADASTRIL AND THE BATTLECATSSSS ARE HIDING.

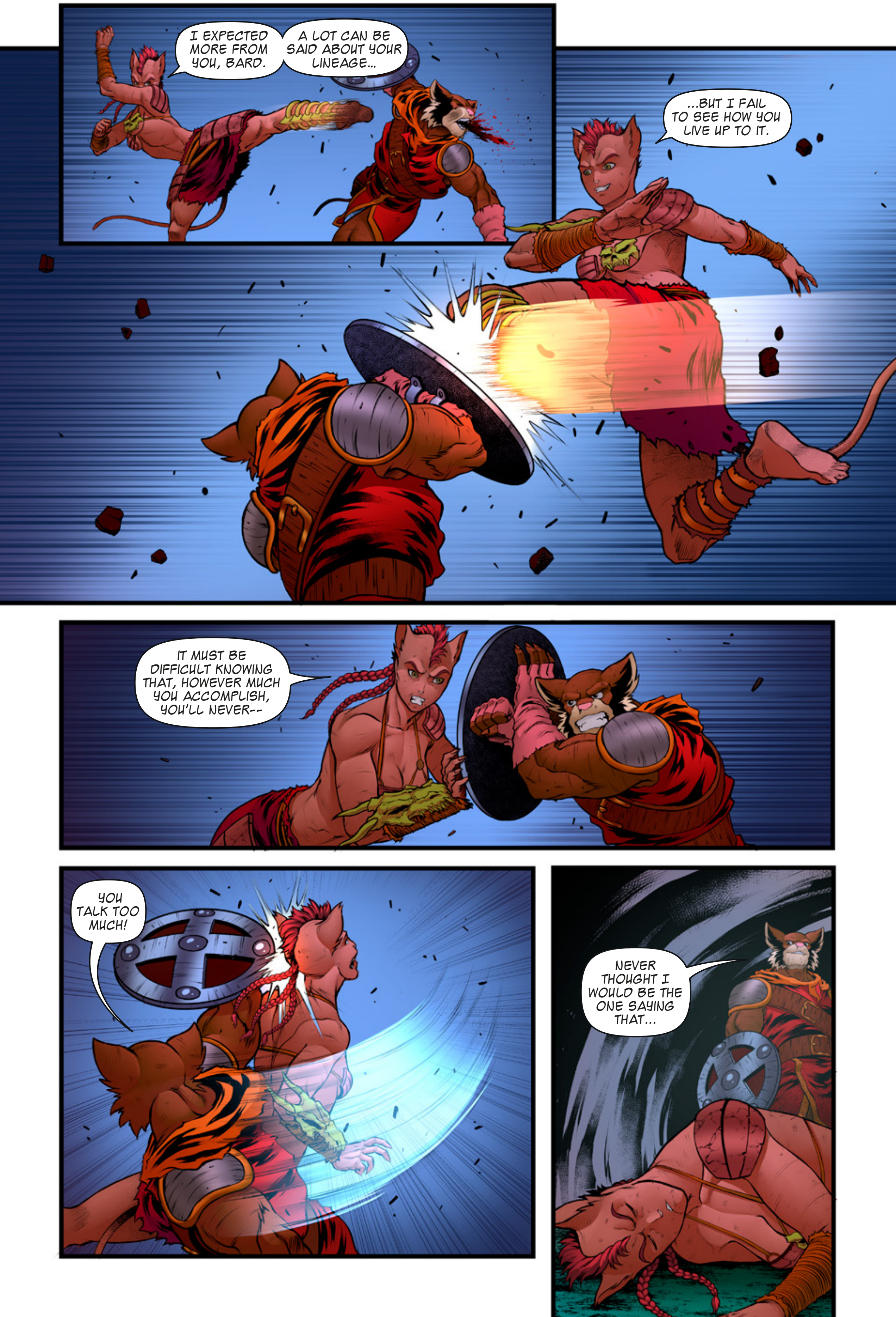

VIKAL CREST, THE PRIDE LANDS.
VALDERIA OWES YOU ALL A GREAT DEAL.
WHAT YOU'VE DONE WILL CHANGE THE TIDES OF THIS WAR, BATTLECATS.
LONG LIVE VALDERIA.
LONG LIVE THE BATTLECATS.
THERE IS NO NEED FOR GRATITUDE.
WE LIVE TO PROTECT THE CROWN AND THE MANDATES.
MY QUEEN, ANY WORD ON NATHARIEN AND ARTAIN? HAVE THEY RETURNED?
UNFORTUNATELY NOT.
THOUGH THEY ARE TAKING LONGER THAN USUAL.

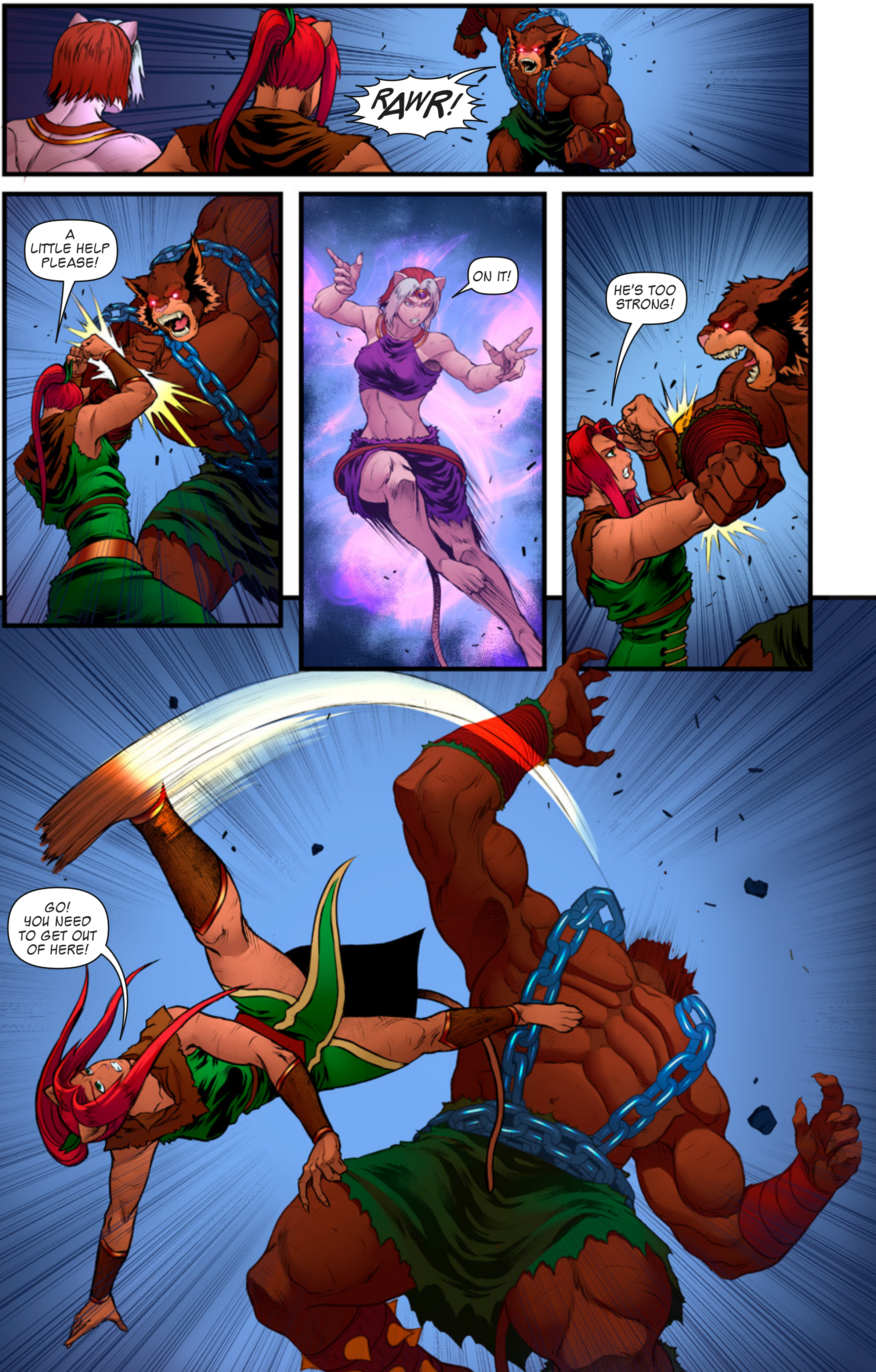

WHAT IF SOMETHING IS WRONG?
IF I HURRY, I COULD BE AT THE GARDENS BY MIDNOCT.
NO, I'M SURE THEY ARE FINE, KALEERA. THE ORACLE HAS A LOT TO DISCUSS WITH THEM *BOTH*.
BUT, MY QUEEN, IF I COULD JUST SEE FOR MYSELF, THEN--
I SAID NO, KALEERA. I NEED YOU HERE.
NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO SPLIT OFF...
...WE NEED TO STAY *UNITED* IF WE ARE TO--
THOOOOM

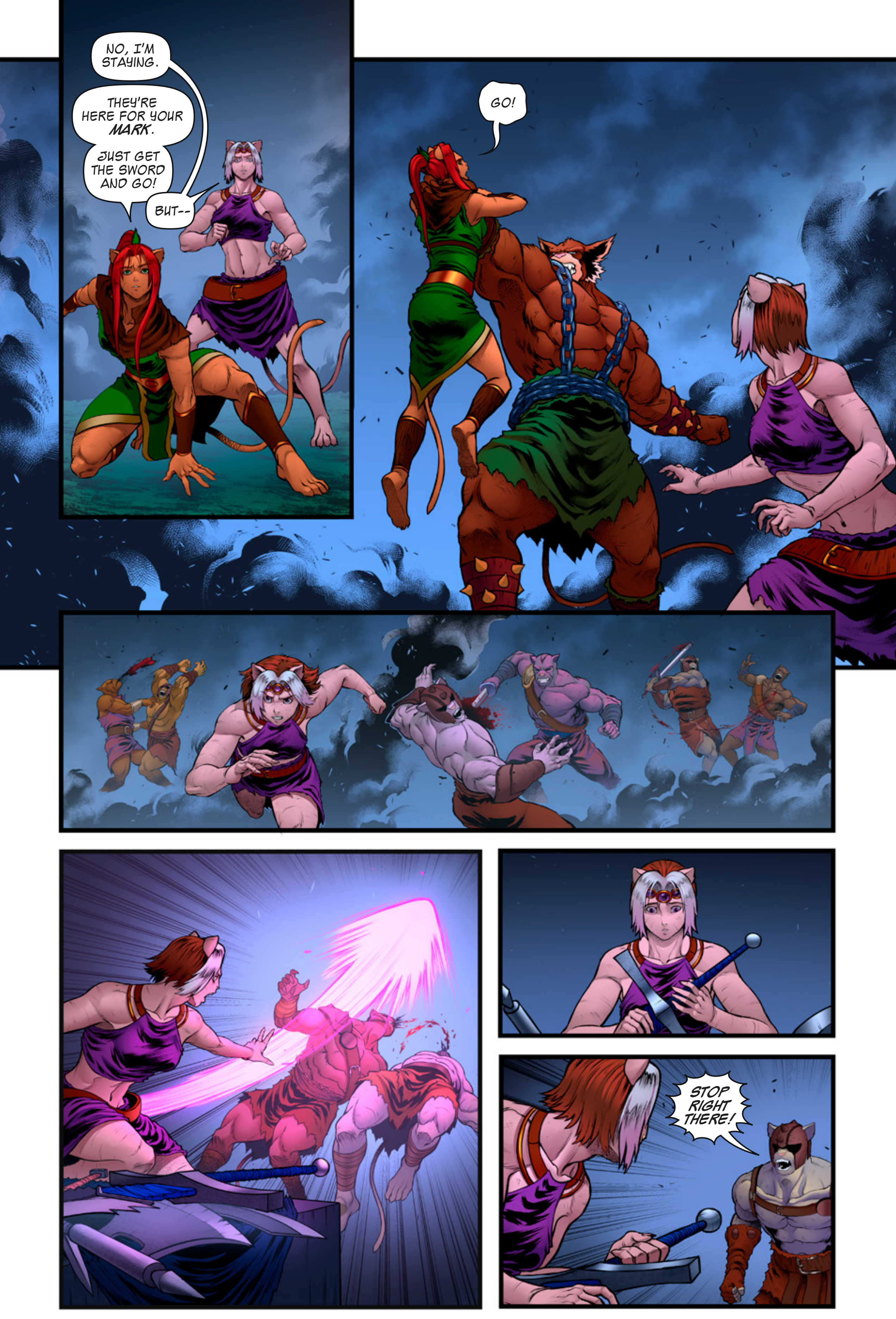

ADASTRIL... IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
RUN!!
BRING ME THE QUEEN AND THE BATTLECATS...
...ALIVE!

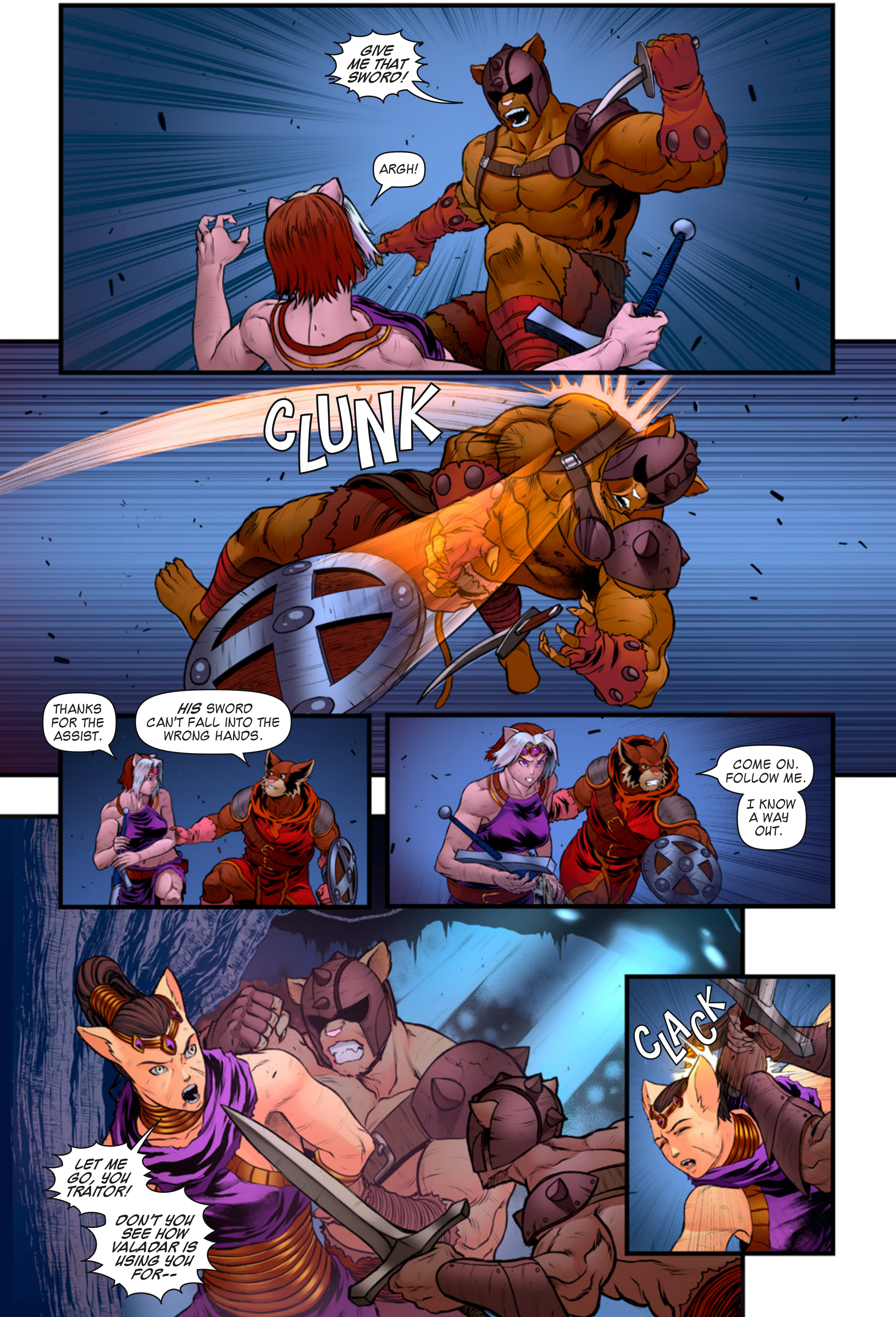

RAWR!
HA!
HyAH!
SHLK
URR
URR
URK--
URR
URR
URR
URR
URR
ACK--
URR
URR
URR
URR
URR
URR

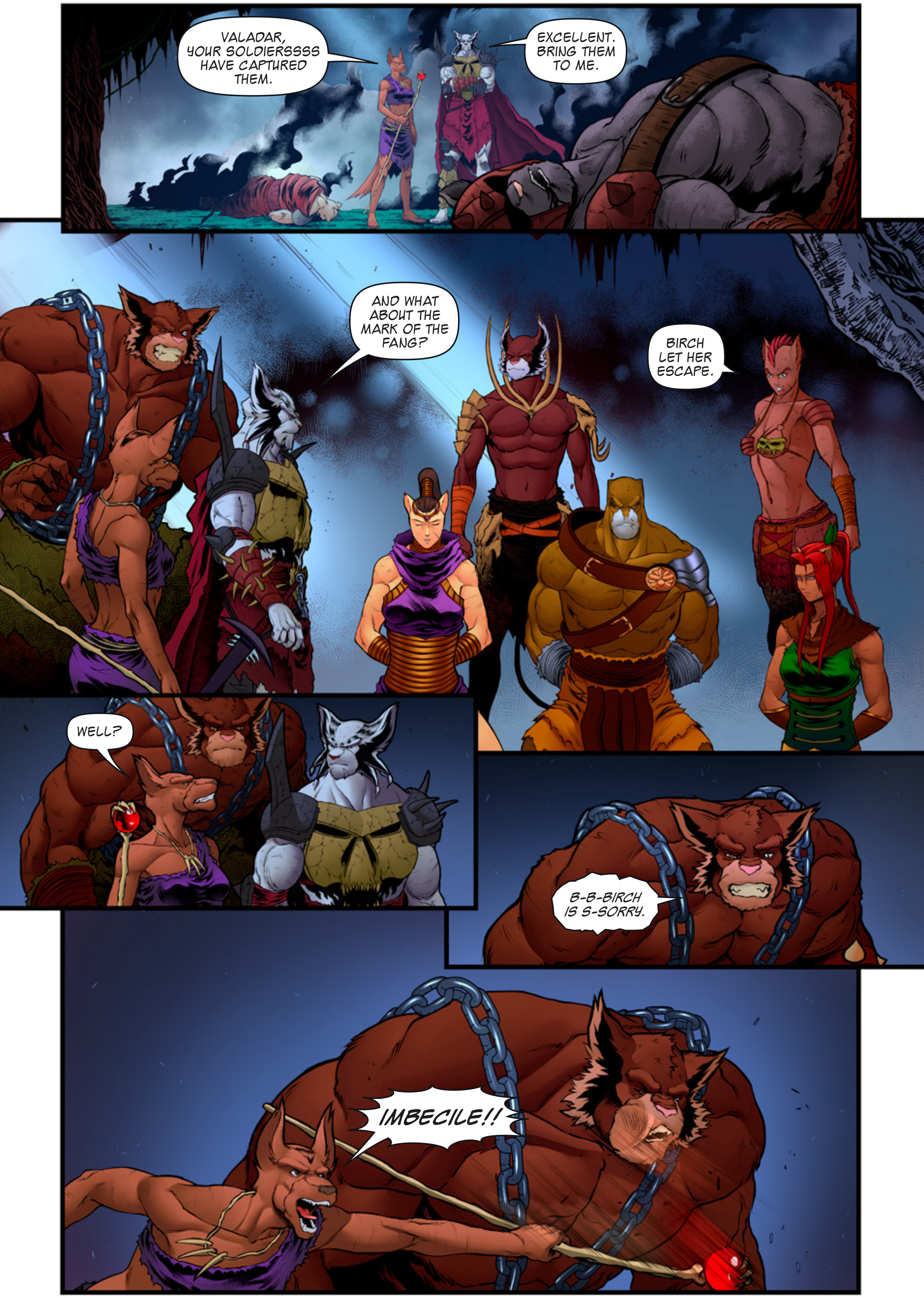

YAAARGHH!
--UGH
URR URR URR URR URR
ELTOREQ MAY HAVE BEEN A FOOL, BUT HE DID NOT DESERVE HIS TRAGIC END.
URR URR URR URR
IF IT WERE UP TO ME, I WOULD *TORTURE* YOU UNTIL YOUR LAST BREATH...
URR URR URR URR
BUT, LUCKY FOR YOU, ZORIEN OF IL-SHAVAAR, VALADAR HAS OTHER PLANS.
URR URR URR URR URR URR URR URR

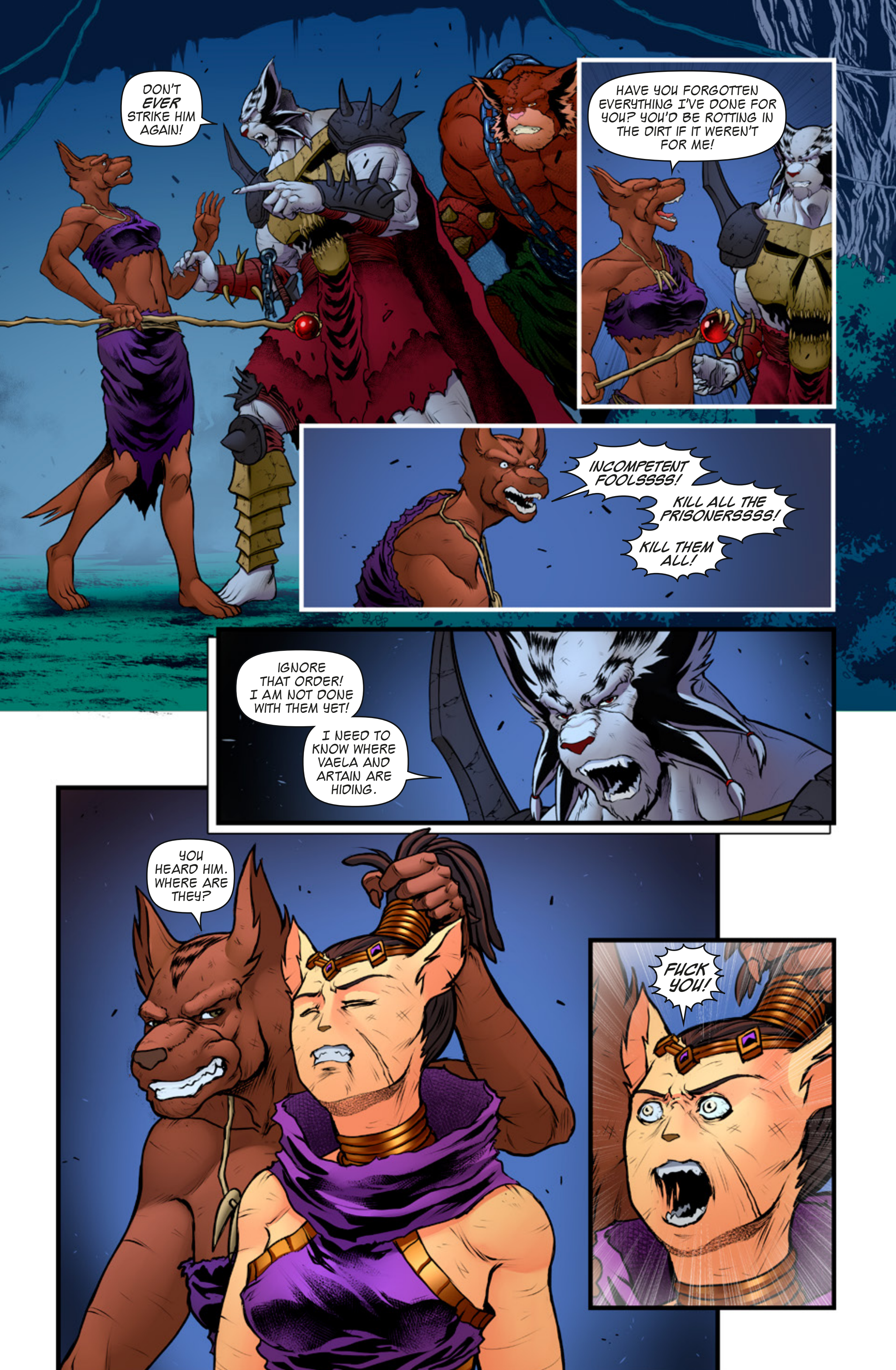

I EXPECTED MORE FROM YOU, BARD.
A LOT CAN BE SAID ABOUT YOUR LINEAGE...
...BUT I FAIL TO SEE HOW YOU LIVE UP TO IT.
IT MUST BE DIFFICULT KNOWING THAT, HOWEVER MUCH YOU ACCOMPLISH, YOU'LL NEVER--
YOU TALK TOO MUCH!
NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD BE THE ONE SAYING THAT...

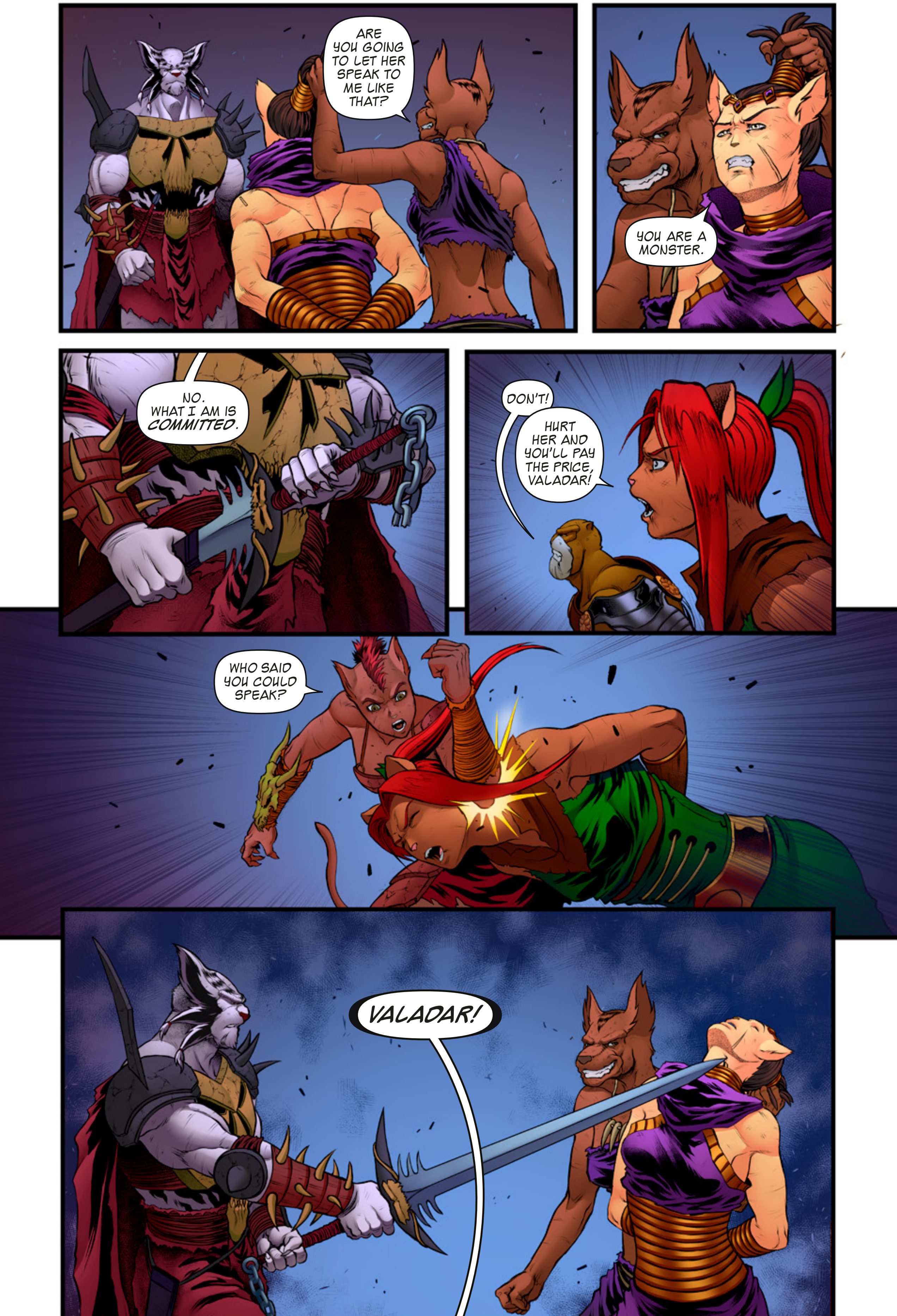

RAWR!
A LITTLE HELP PLEASE!
ON IT!
HE'S TOO STRONG!
GO! YOU NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE!

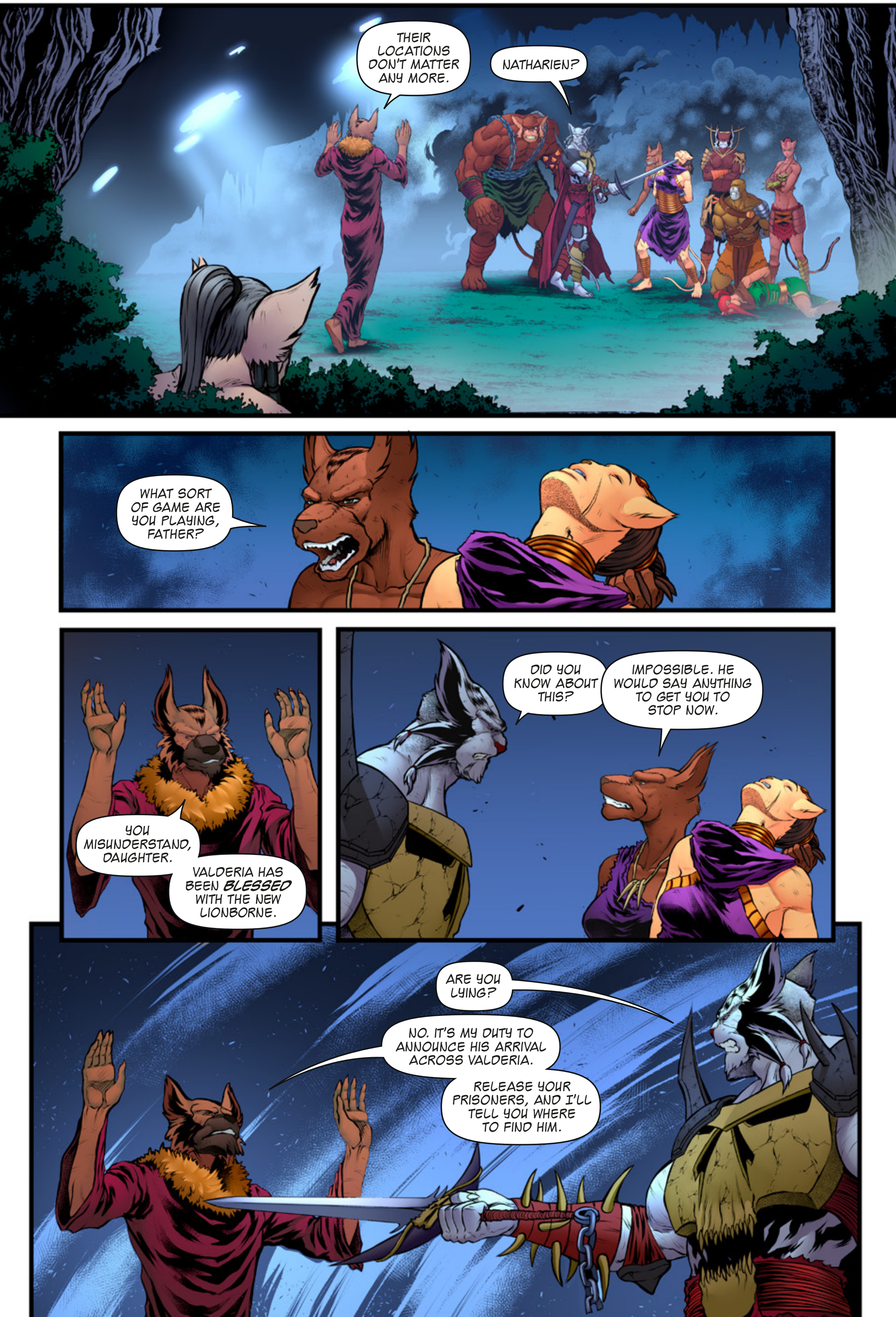

NO, I'M STAYING.
THEY'RE HERE FOR YOUR *MARK*.
JUST GET THE SWORD AND GO!
BUT--
GO!
STOP RIGHT THERE!

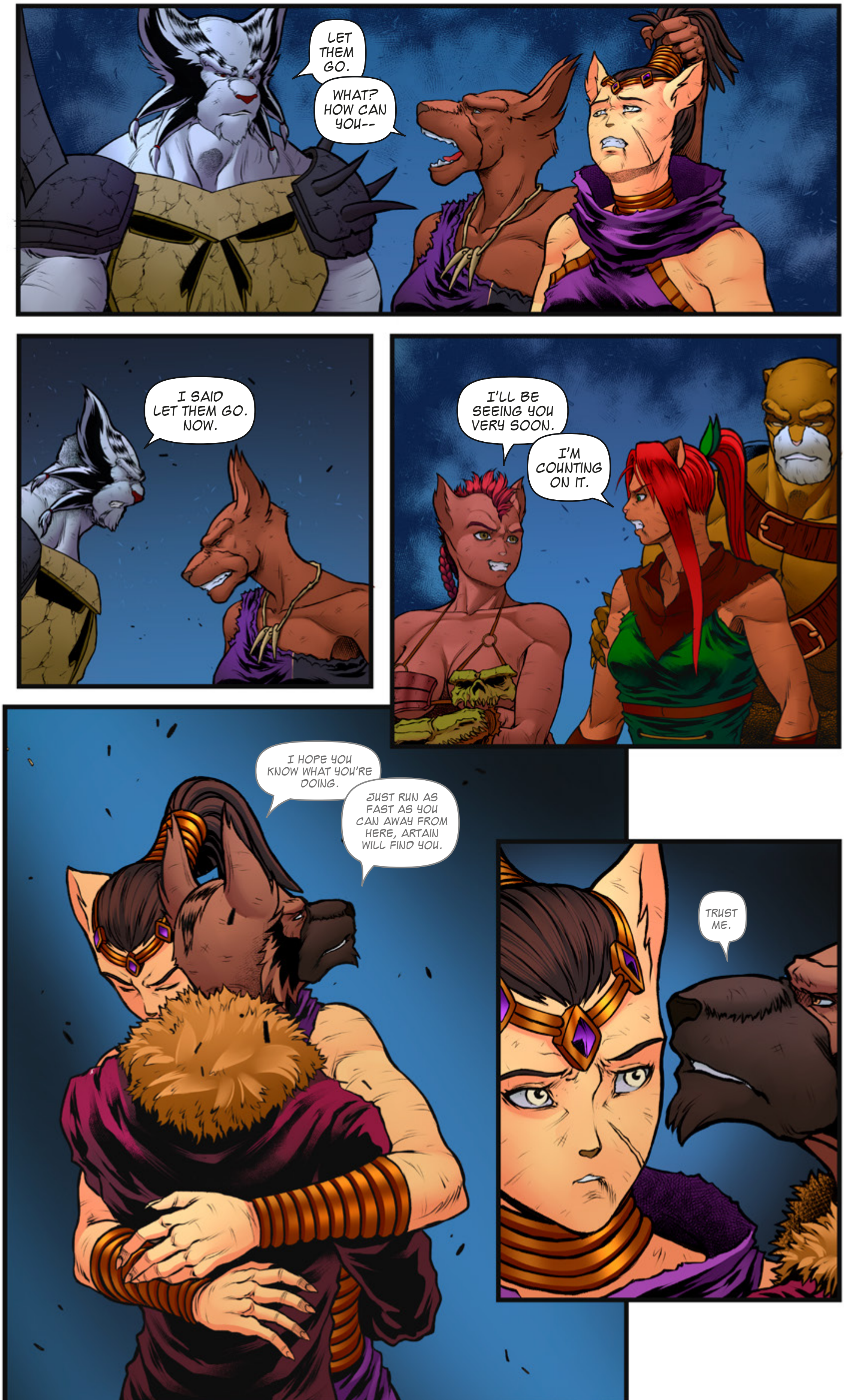

GIVE ME THAT SWORD!
ARGH!
CLUNK
THANKS FOR THE ASSIST.
HIS SWORD CAN'T FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS.
COME ON. FOLLOW ME.
I KNOW A WAY OUT.
LET ME GO, YOU TRAITOR!
DON'T YOU SEE HOW VALADAR IS USING YOU FOR--
CLACK

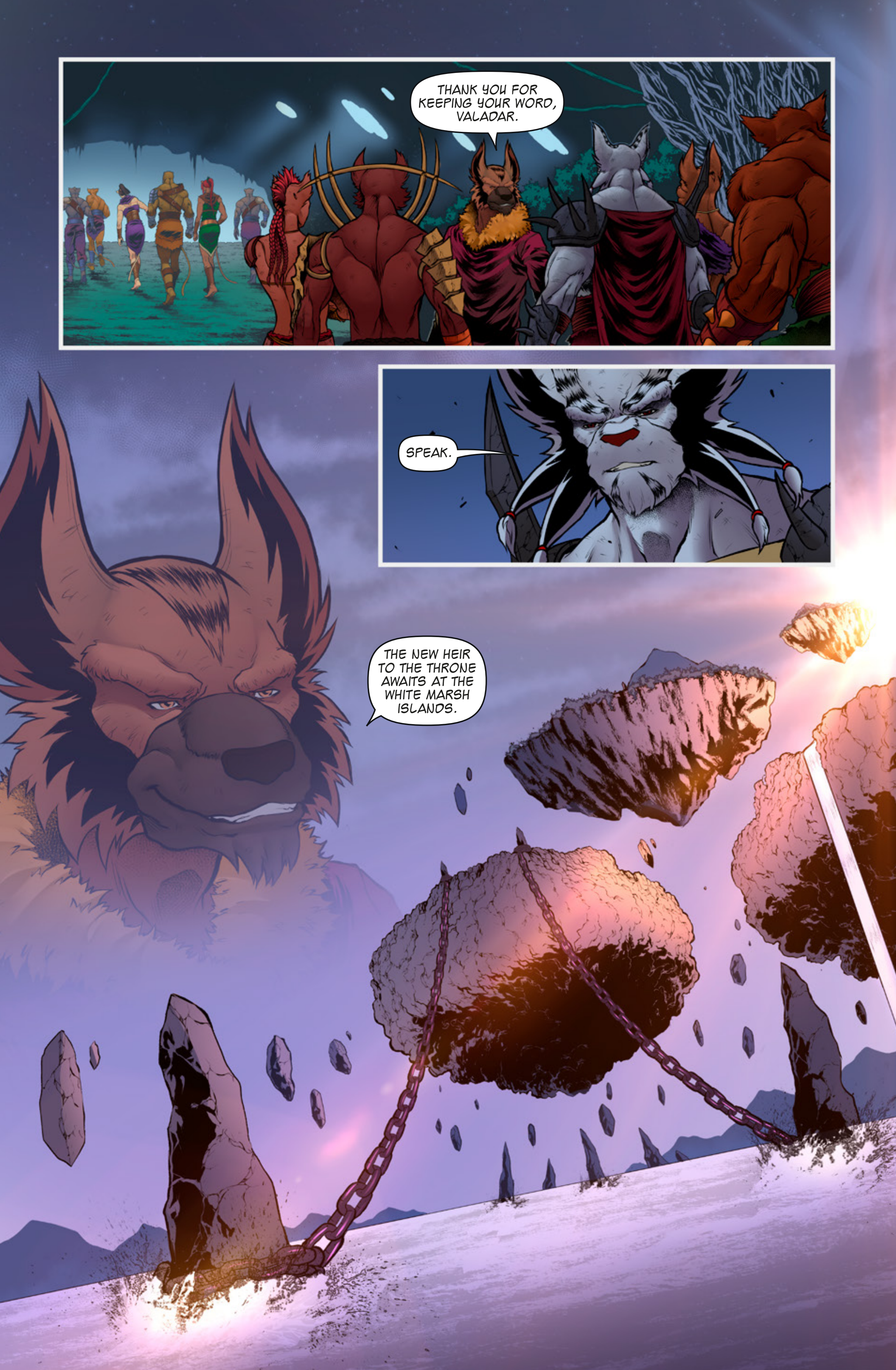

VALADAR, YOUR SOLDIERSSSS HAVE CAPTURED THEM.
EXCELLENT. BRING THEM TO ME.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE MARK OF THE FANG?
BIRCH LET HER ESCAPE.
WELL?
B-B-BIRCH IS S-SORRY.
IMBECILE!!


DON'T EVER STRIKE HIM AGAIN!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING I'VE DONE FOR YOU? YOU'D BE ROTTING IN THE DIRT IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME!
INCOMPETENT FOOLSSSS!
KILL ALL THE PRISONERSSSS!
KILL THEM ALL!
IGNORE THAT ORDER! I AM NOT DONE WITH THEM YET!
I NEED TO KNOW WHERE VAELA AND ARTAIN ARE HIDING.
YOU HEARD HIM. WHERE ARE THEY?
FUCK YOU!


ARE YOU GOING TO LET HER SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT?
YOU ARE A MONSTER.
NO. WHAT I AM IS *COMMITTED*.
DON'T!
HURT HER AND YOU'LL PAY THE PRICE, VALADAR!
WHO SAID YOU COULD SPEAK?
VALADAR!


THEIR LOCATIONS DON'T MATTER ANY MORE.
NATHARIEN?
WHAT SORT OF GAME ARE YOU PLAYING, FATHER?
YOU MISUNDERSTAND, DAUGHTER.
VALDERIA HAS BEEN **BLESSED** WITH THE NEW LIONBORNE.
DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
IMPOSSIBLE. HE WOULD SAY ANYTHING TO GET YOU TO STOP NOW.
ARE YOU LYING?
NO. IT'S MY DUTY TO ANNOUNCE HIS ARRIVAL ACROSS VALDERIA.
RELEASE YOUR PRISONERS, AND I'LL TELL YOU WHERE TO FIND HIM.


LET THEM GO.
WHAT? HOW CAN YOU--
I SAID LET THEM GO. NOW.
I'LL BE SEEING YOU VERY SOON.
I'M COUNTING ON IT.
I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
JUST RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN AWAY FROM HERE, ARTAIN WILL FIND YOU.
TRUST ME.

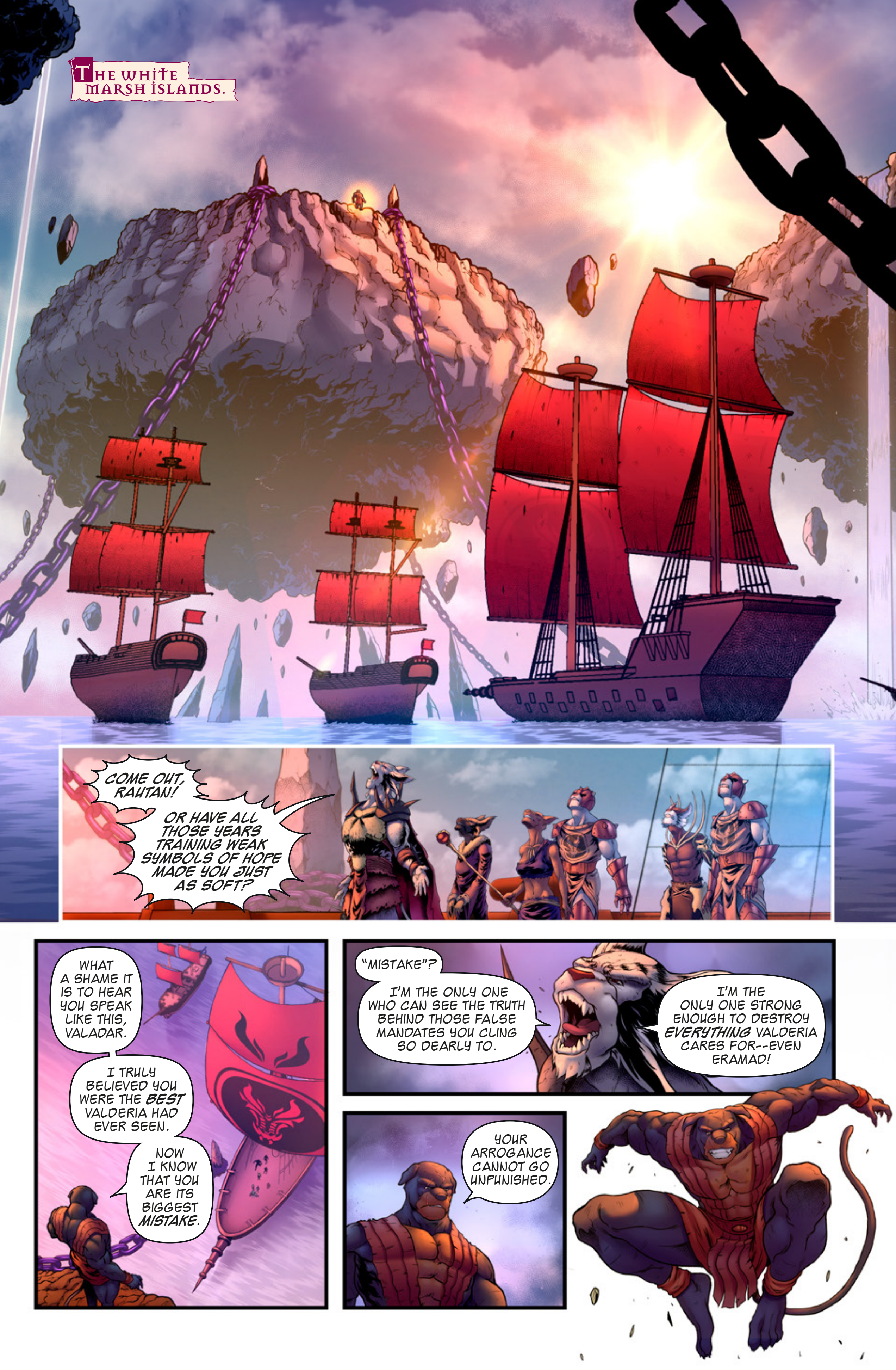

THANK YOU FOR KEEPING YOUR WORD, VALADAR.
SPEAK.
THE NEW HEIR TO THE THRONE AWAITS AT THE WHITE MARSH ISLANDS.

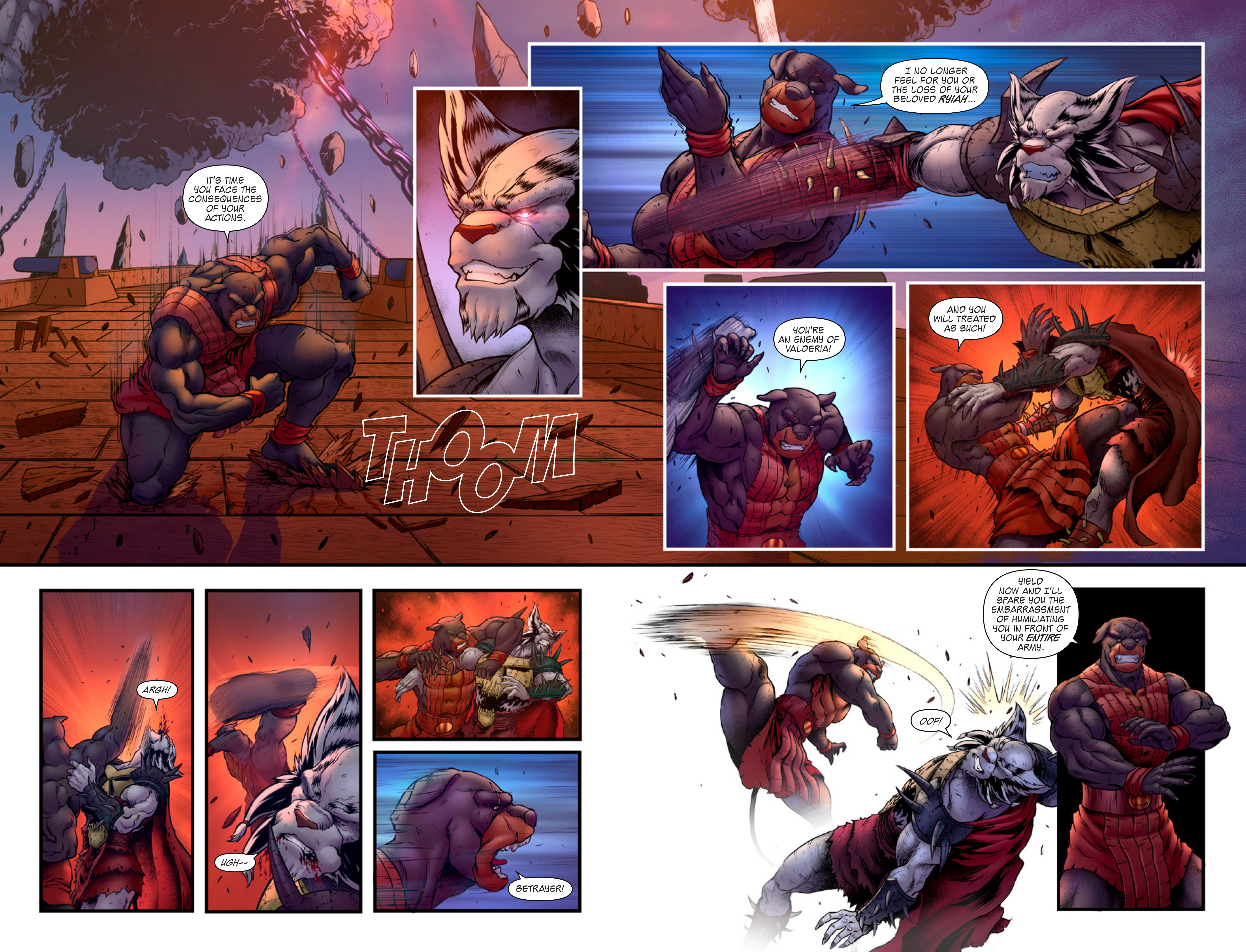
FIGHT FOR VALDERIA

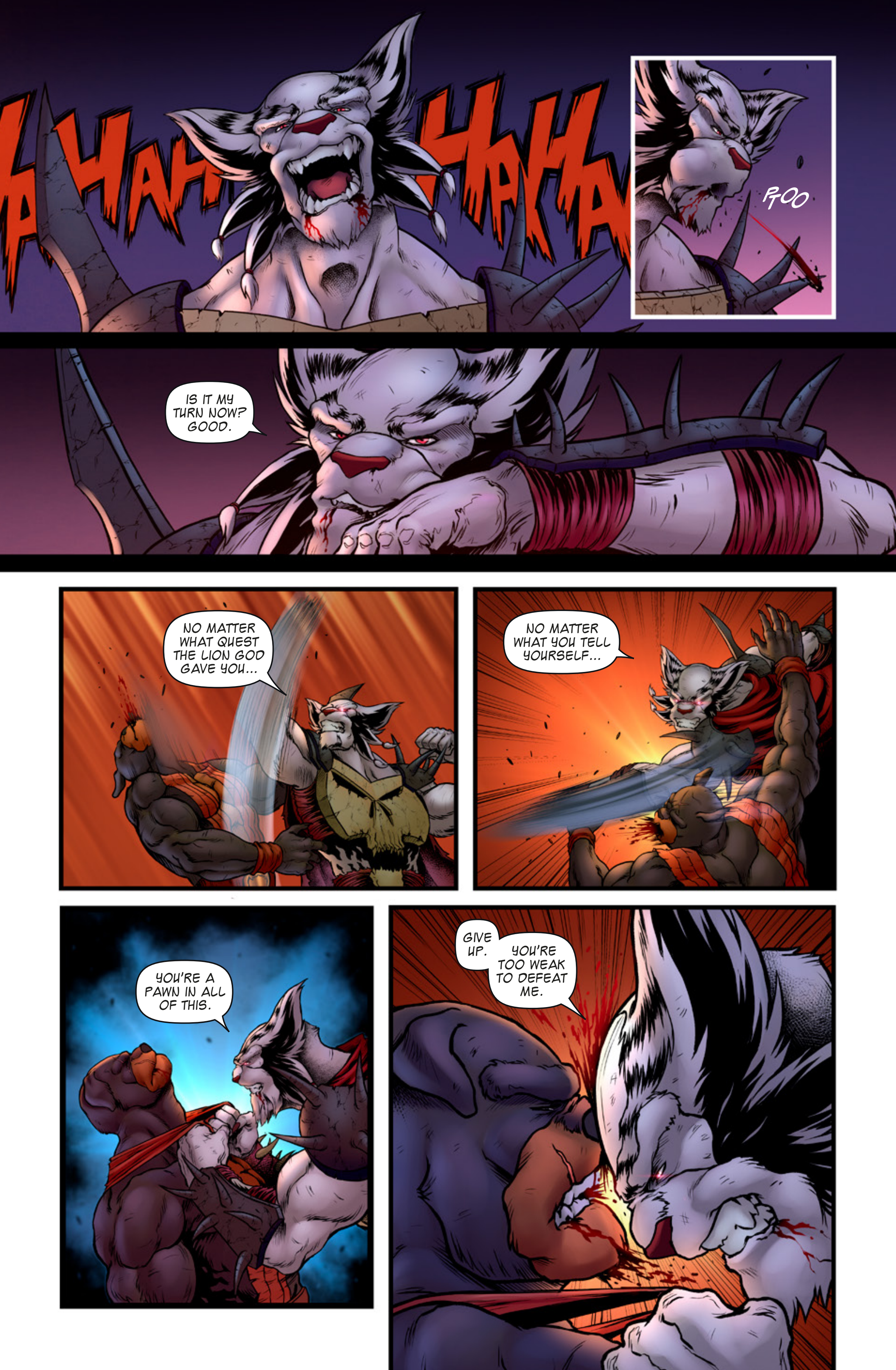
6

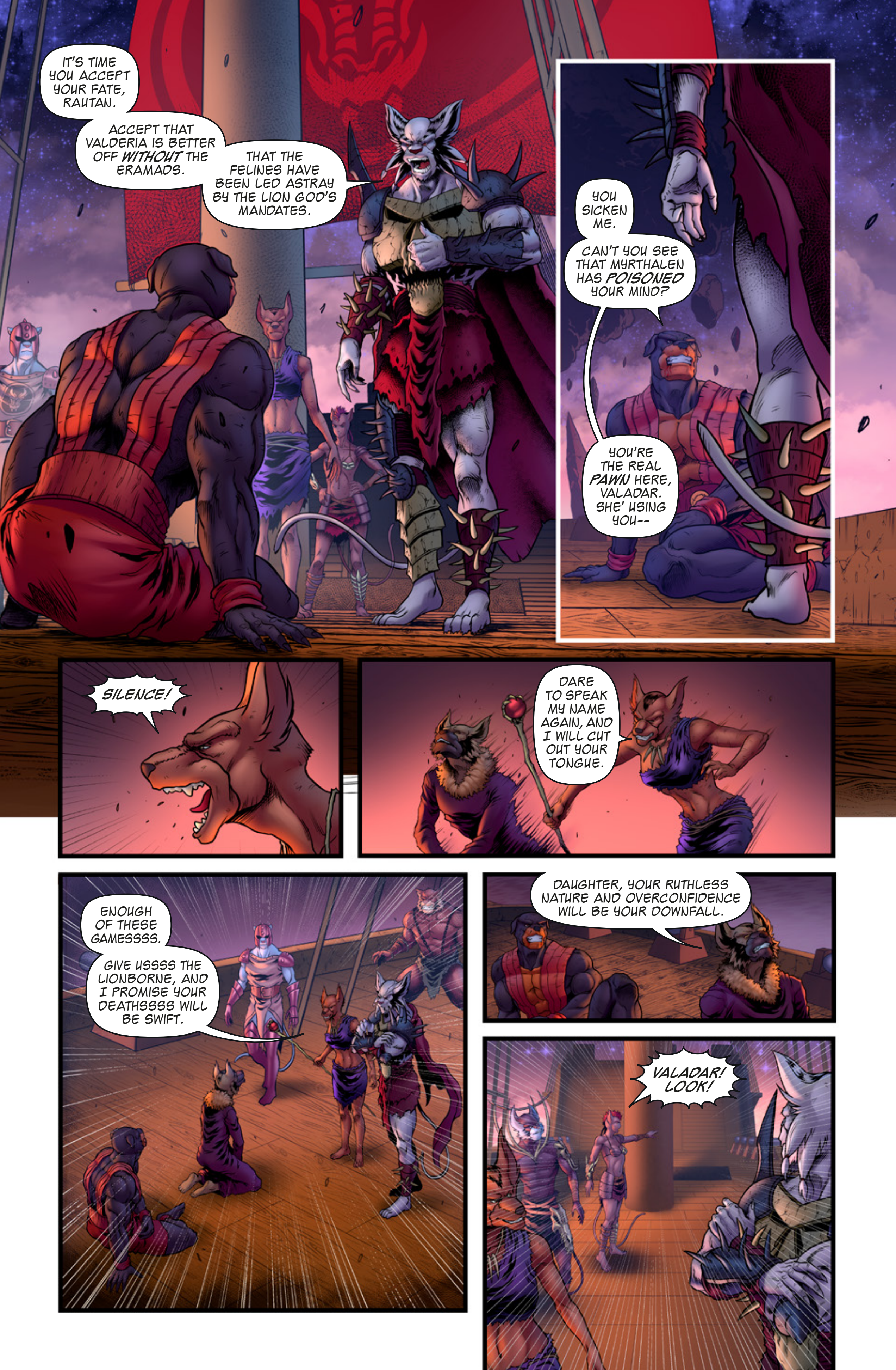
Chapter Six

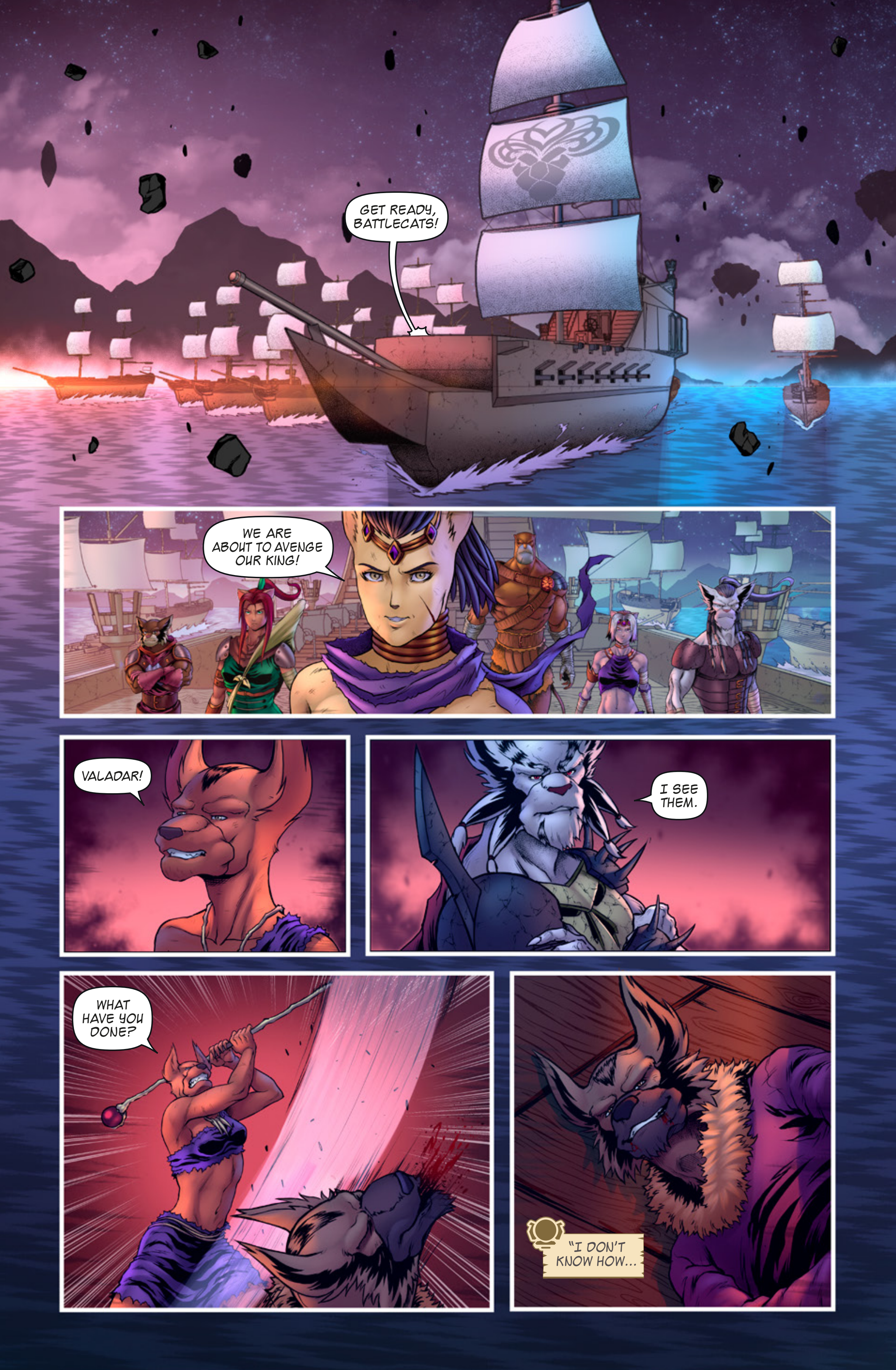
BATTLECATS®

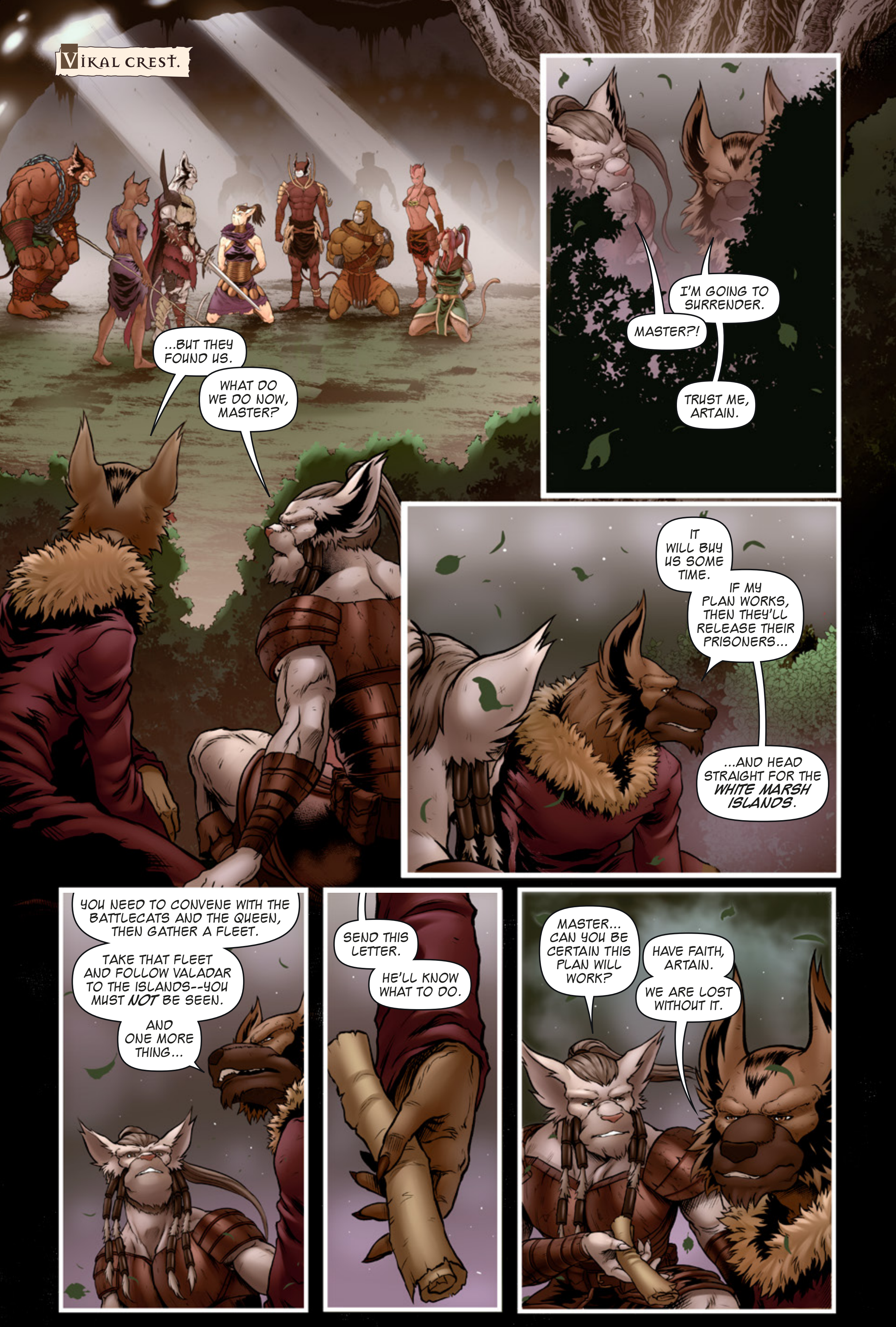

THE WHITE MARSH ISLANDS.
COME OUT, RAUTAN!
OR HAVE ALL THOSE YEARS TRAINING WEAK SYMBOLS OF HOPE MADE YOU JUST AS SOFT?
WHAT A SHAME IT IS TO HEAR YOU SPEAK LIKE THIS, VALADAR.
I TRULY BELIEVED YOU WERE THE *BEST* VALDERIA HAD EVER SEEN.
NOW I KNOW THAT YOU ARE ITS BIGGEST *MISTAKE*.
"MISTAKE"?
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SEE THE TRUTH BEHIND THOSE FALSE MANDATES YOU CLING SO DEARLY TO.
I'M THE ONLY ONE STRONG ENOUGH TO DESTROY *EVERYTHING* VALDERIA CARES FOR--EVEN ERAMAD!
YOUR ARROGANCE CANNOT GO UNPUNISHED.

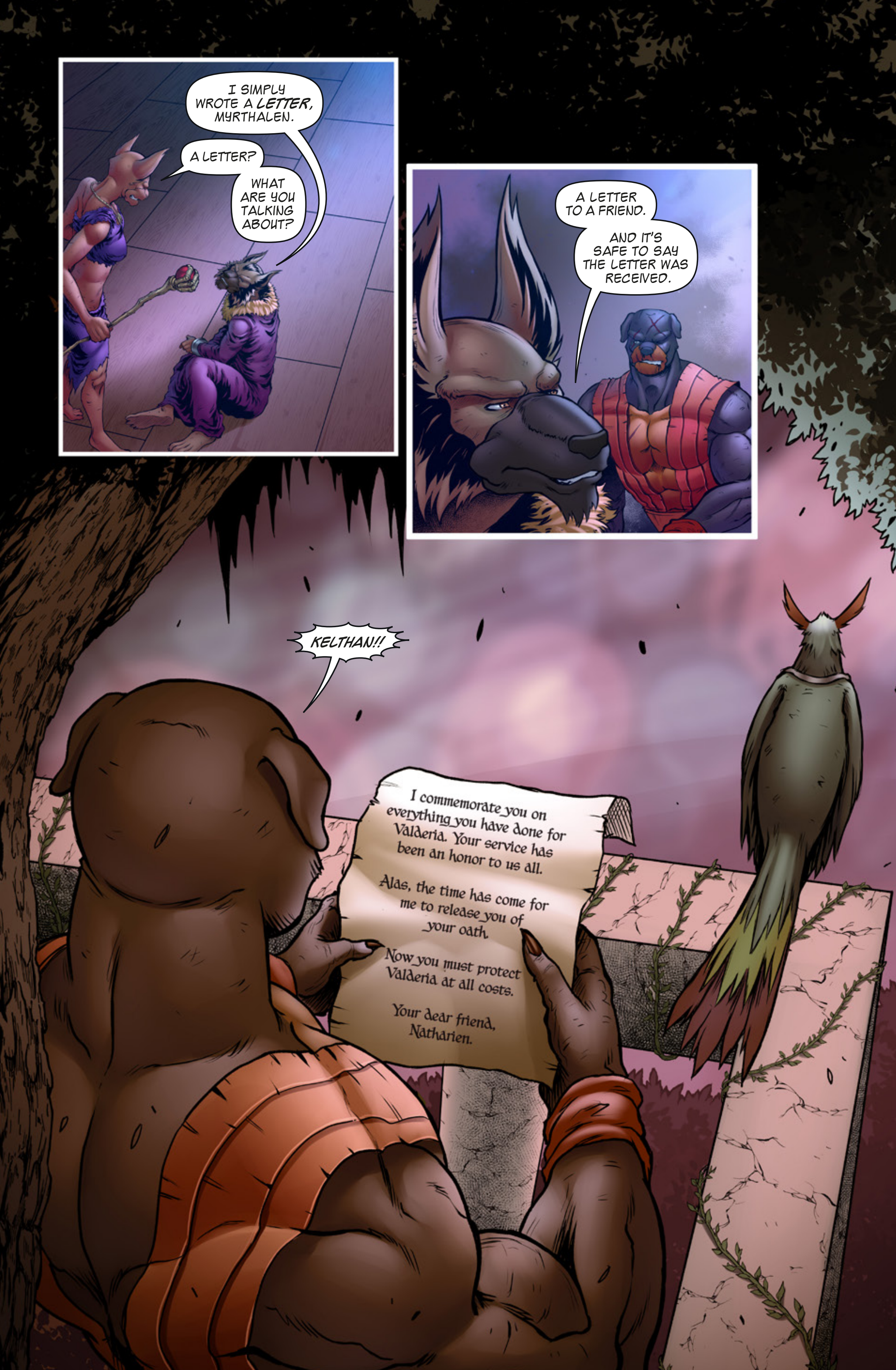

IT'S TIME YOU FACE THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS.
THOOM
I NO LONGER FEEL FOR YOU OR THE LOSS OF YOUR BELOVED RYIAH...
YOU'RE AN ENEMY OF VALDERIA!
AND YOU WILL TREATED AS SUCH!
ARGH!
UGH--
BETRAYER!
OOF!
YIELD NOW AND I'LL SPARE YOU THE EMBARRASSMENT OF HUMILIATING YOU IN FRONT OF YOUR ENTIRE ARMY.


HAHAH
HAHAHA
PTOO
IS IT MY TURN NOW? GOOD.
NO MATTER WHAT QUEST THE LION GOD GAVE YOU...
NO MATTER WHAT YOU TELL YOURSELF...
YOU'RE A PAWN IN ALL OF THIS.
GIVE UP.
YOU'RE TOO WEAK TO DEFEAT ME.


IT'S TIME YOU ACCEPT YOUR FATE, RAUTAN.
ACCEPT THAT VALDERIA IS BETTER OFF *WITHOUT* THE ERAMADS.
THAT THE FELINES HAVE BEEN LED ASTRAY BY THE LION GOD'S MANDATES.
YOU SICKEN ME.
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT MYRTHALEN HAS *POISONED* YOUR MIND?
YOU'RE THE REAL *PAWN* HERE, VALADAR. SHE' USING YOU--
SILENCE!
DARE TO SPEAK MY NAME AGAIN, AND I WILL CUT OUT YOUR TONGUE.
ENOUGH OF THESE GAMESSSS.
GIVE USSSS THE LIONBORNE, AND I PROMISE YOUR DEATHSSSS WILL BE SWIFT.
DAUGHTER, YOUR RUTHLESS NATURE AND OVERCONFIDENCE WILL BE YOUR DOWNFALL.
VALADAR! LOOK!


GET READY, BATTLECATS!
WE ARE ABOUT TO AVENGE OUR KING!
VALADAR!
I SEE THEM.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
"I DON'T KNOW HOW...


VIKAL CREST.
...BUT THEY FOUND US.
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, MASTER?
I'M GOING TO SURRENDER.
MASTER?!
TRUST ME, ARTAIN.
IT WILL BUY US SOME TIME.
IF MY PLAN WORKS, THEN THEY'LL RELEASE THEIR PRISONERS...
...AND HEAD STRAIGHT FOR THE *WHITE MARSH ISLANDS*.
YOU NEED TO CONVENE WITH THE BATTLECATS AND THE QUEEN, THEN GATHER A FLEET.
TAKE THAT FLEET AND FOLLOW VALADAR TO THE ISLANDS--YOU MUST *NOT* BE SEEN.
AND ONE MORE THING...
SEND THIS LETTER.
HE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO.
MASTER... CAN YOU BE CERTAIN THIS PLAN WILL WORK?
HAVE FAITH, ARTAIN.
WE ARE LOST WITHOUT IT.

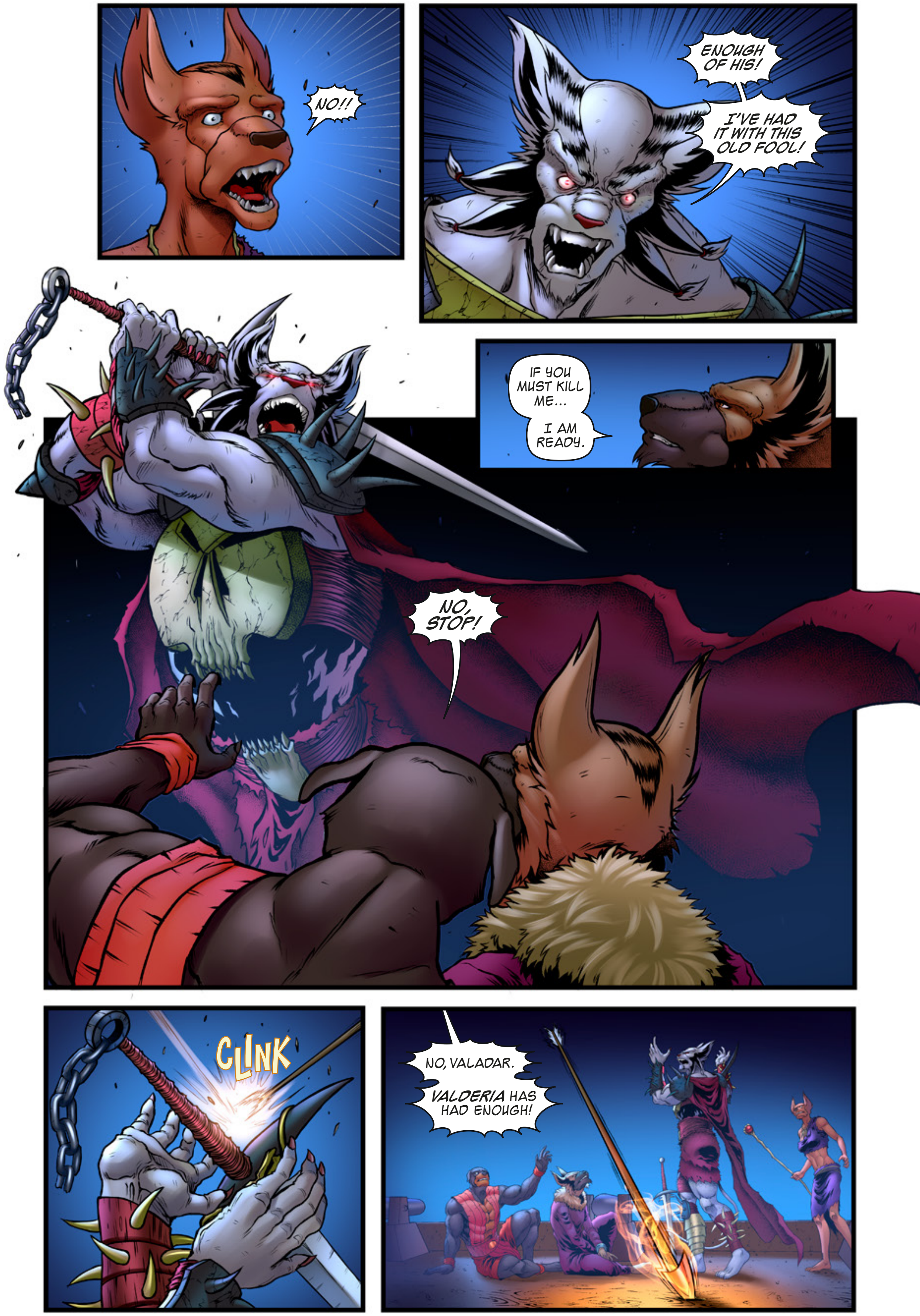

I SIMPLY WROTE A *LETTER,* MYRTHALEN.
A LETTER?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
A LETTER TO A FRIEND.
AND IT'S SAFE TO SAY THE LETTER WAS RECEIVED.
KELTHAN!!

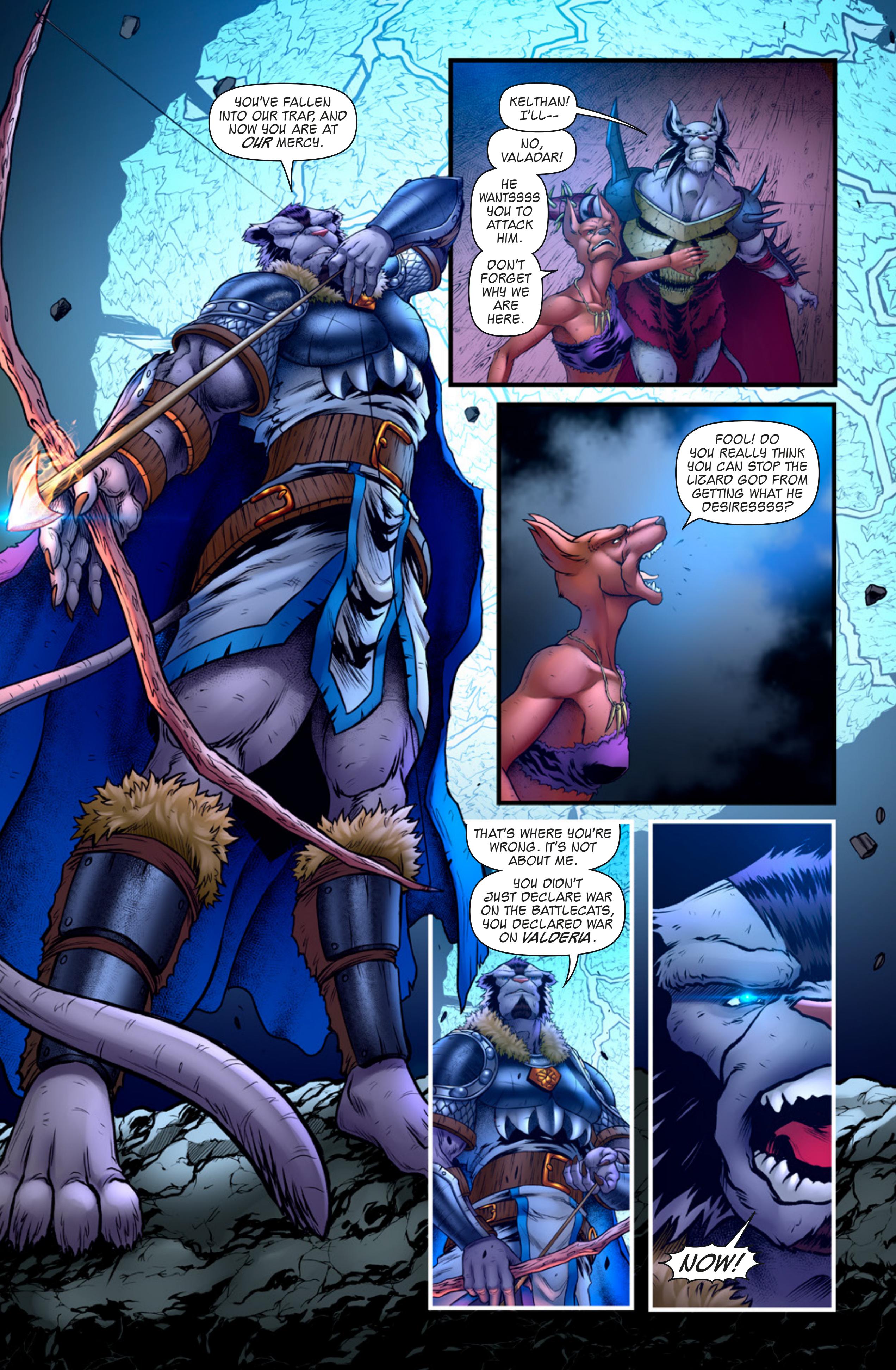
I commemorate you on everything you have done for Valderia. Your service has been an honor to us all.

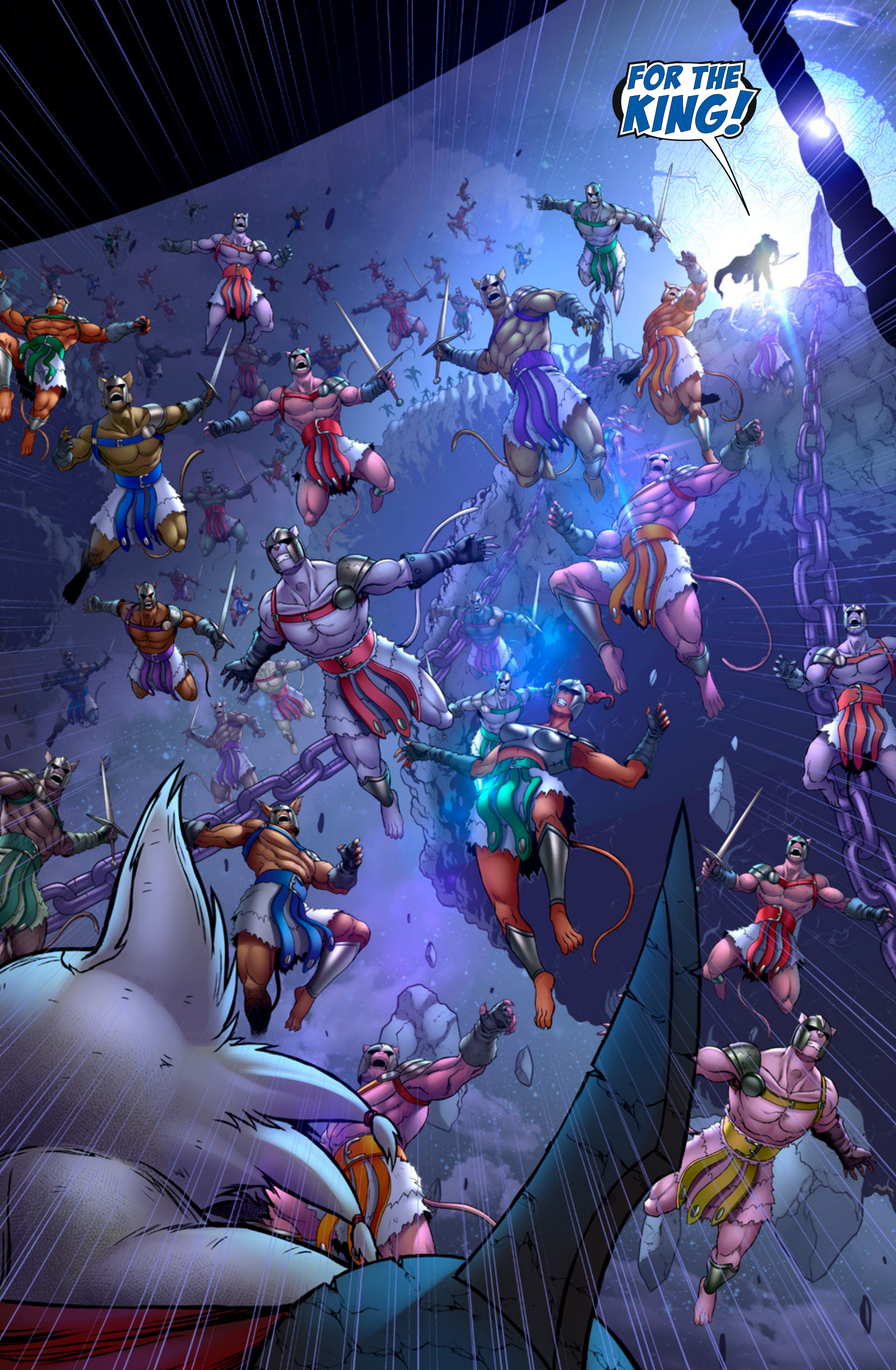
Alas, the time has come for me to release you of your oath.

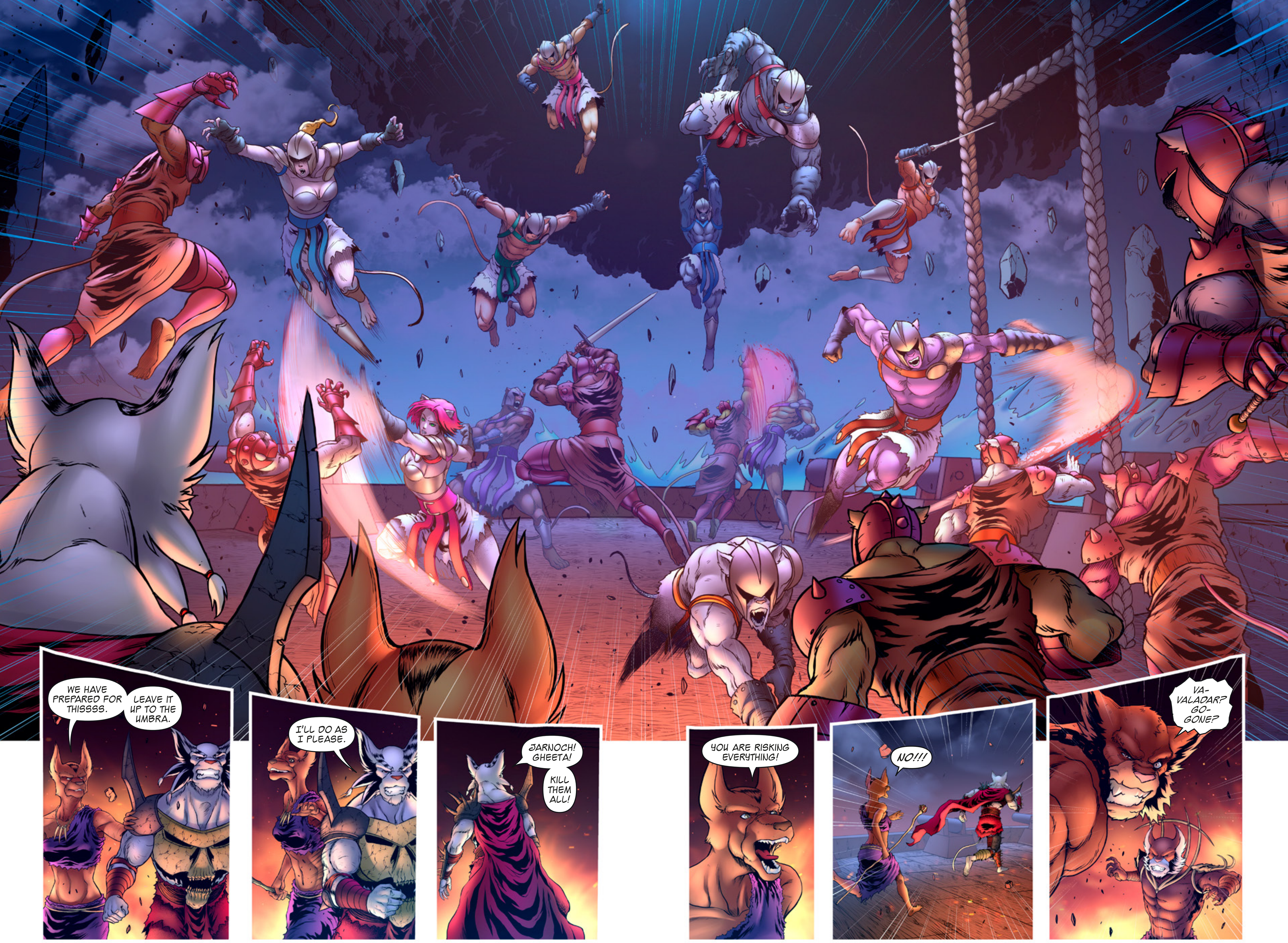
Now you must protect Valderia at all costs.

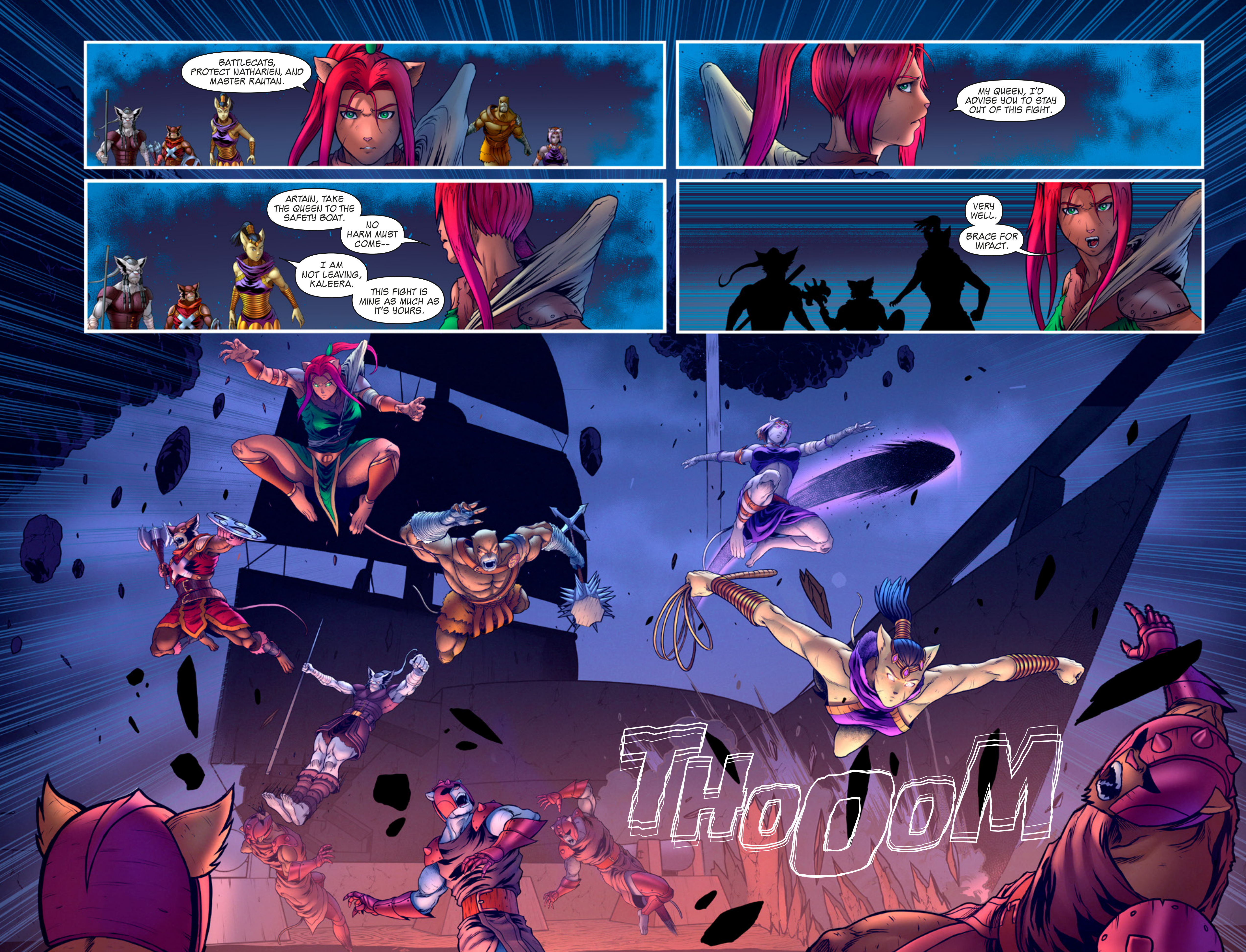
Your dear friend,
Natharien.

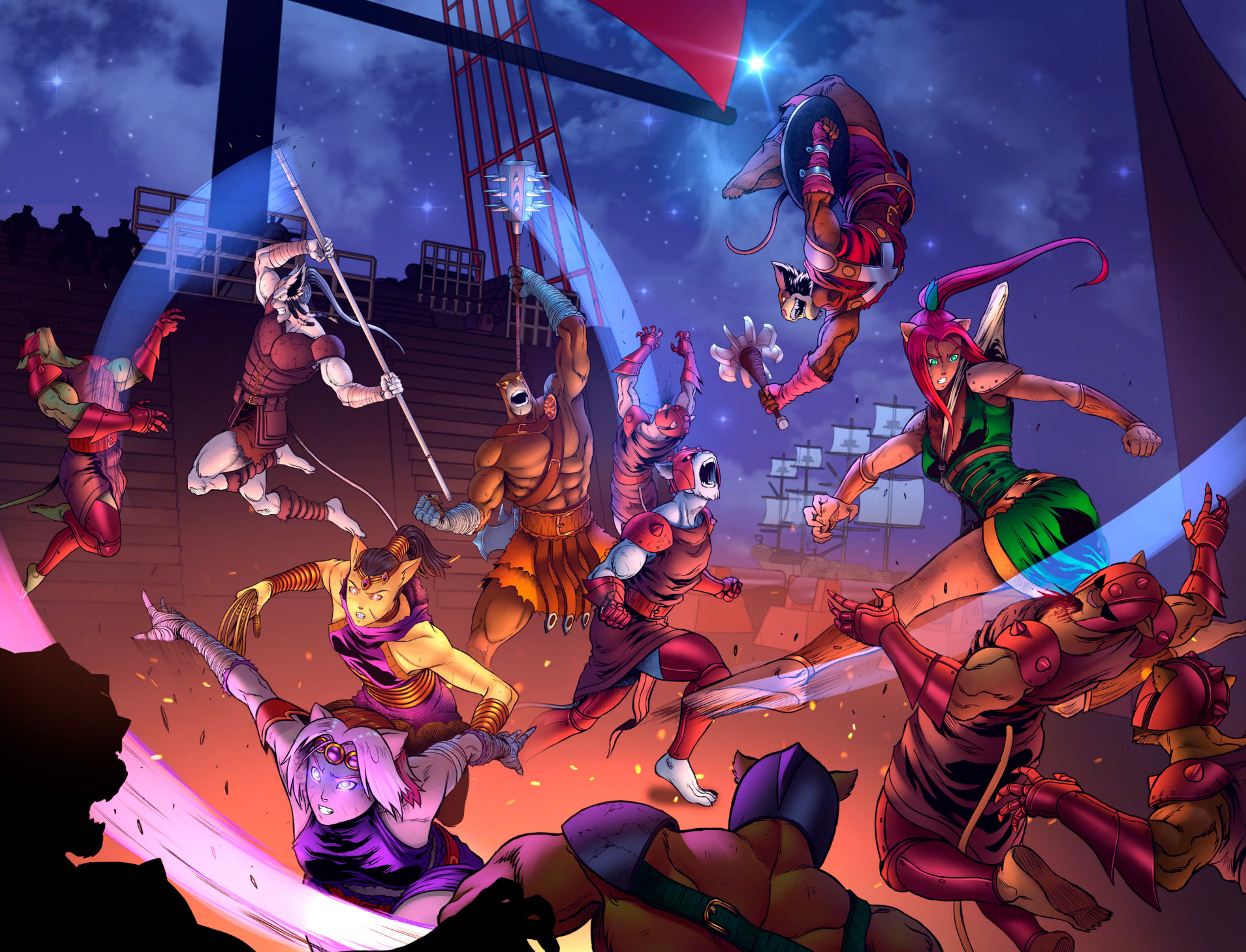

NO!!
ENOUGH OF HIS!
I'VE HAD IT WITH THIS OLD FOOL!
IF YOU MUST KILL ME...
I AM READY.
NO, STOP!
CLINK
NO, VALADAR.
VALDERIA HAS HAD ENOUGH!

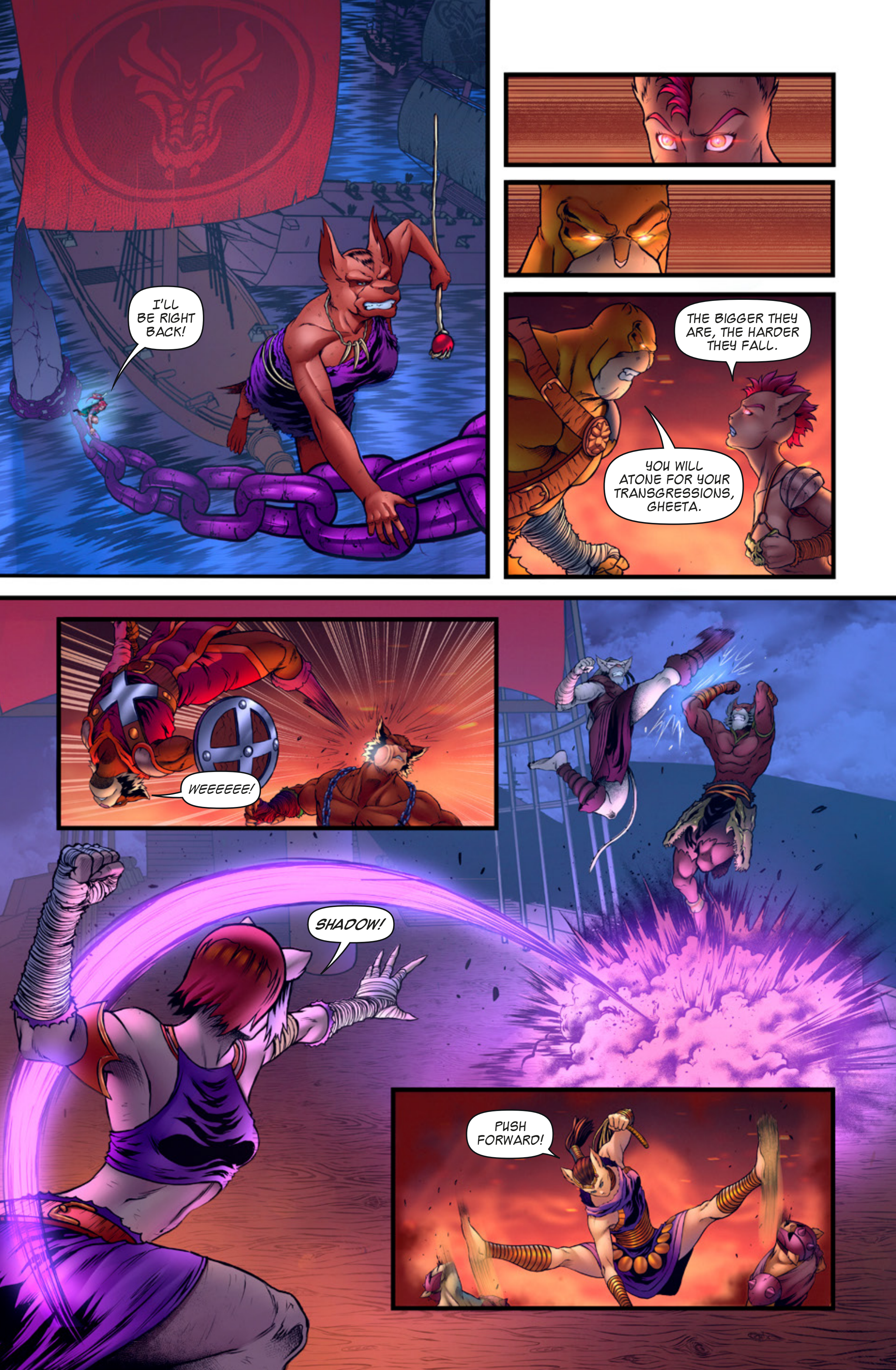

YOU'VE FALLEN INTO OUR TRAP, AND NOW YOU ARE AT *OUR* MERCY.
KELTHAN! I'LL--
NO, VALADAR!
HE WANTSSSS YOU TO ATTACK HIM.
DON'T FORGET WHY WE ARE HERE.
FOOL! DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN STOP THE LIZARD GOD FROM GETTING WHAT HE DESIRESSSS?
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG. IT'S NOT ABOUT ME.
YOU DIDN'T JUST DECLARE WAR ON THE BATTLECATS, YOU DECLARED WAR ON *VALDERIA*.
NOW!

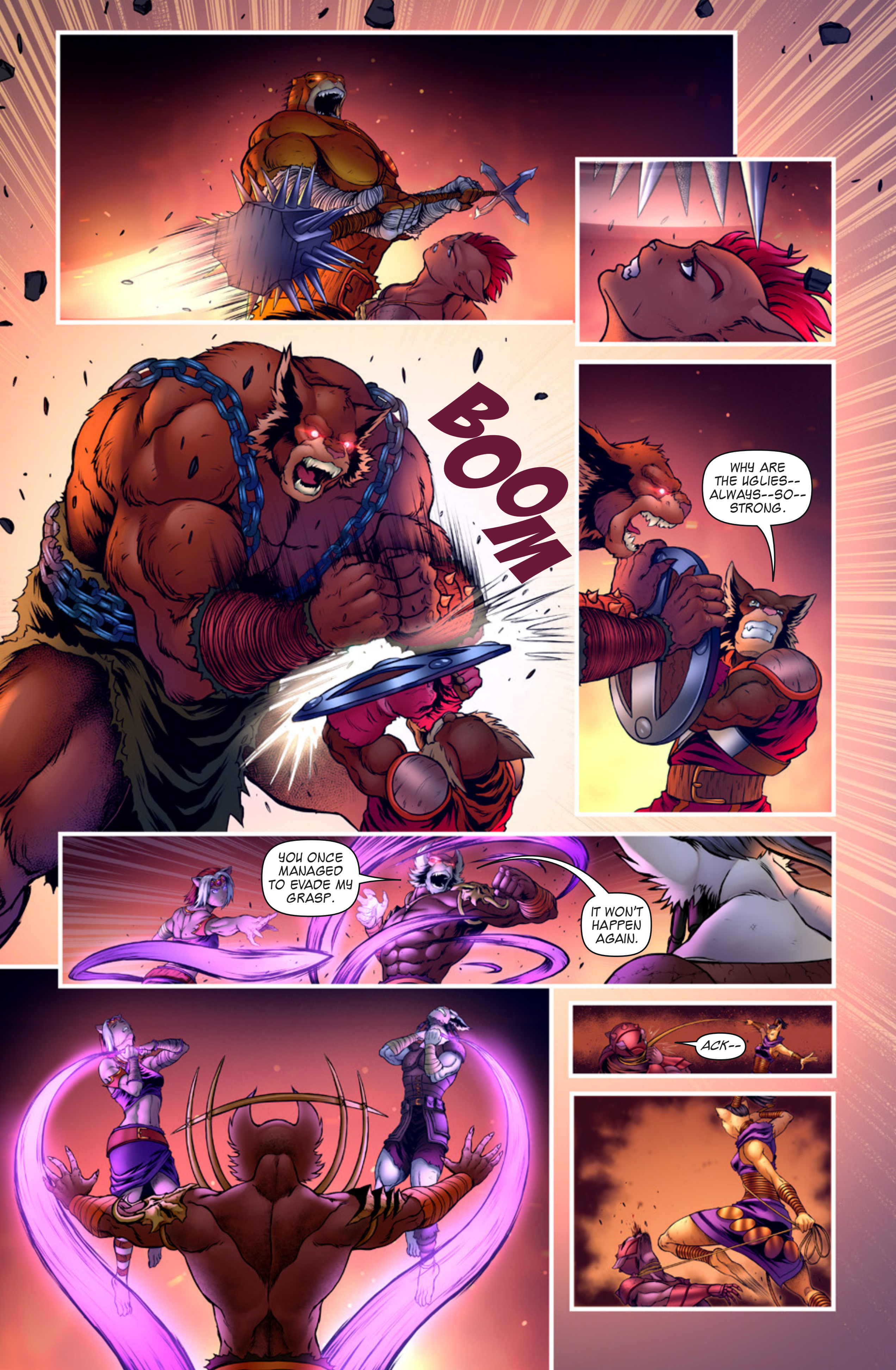

FOR THE KING!

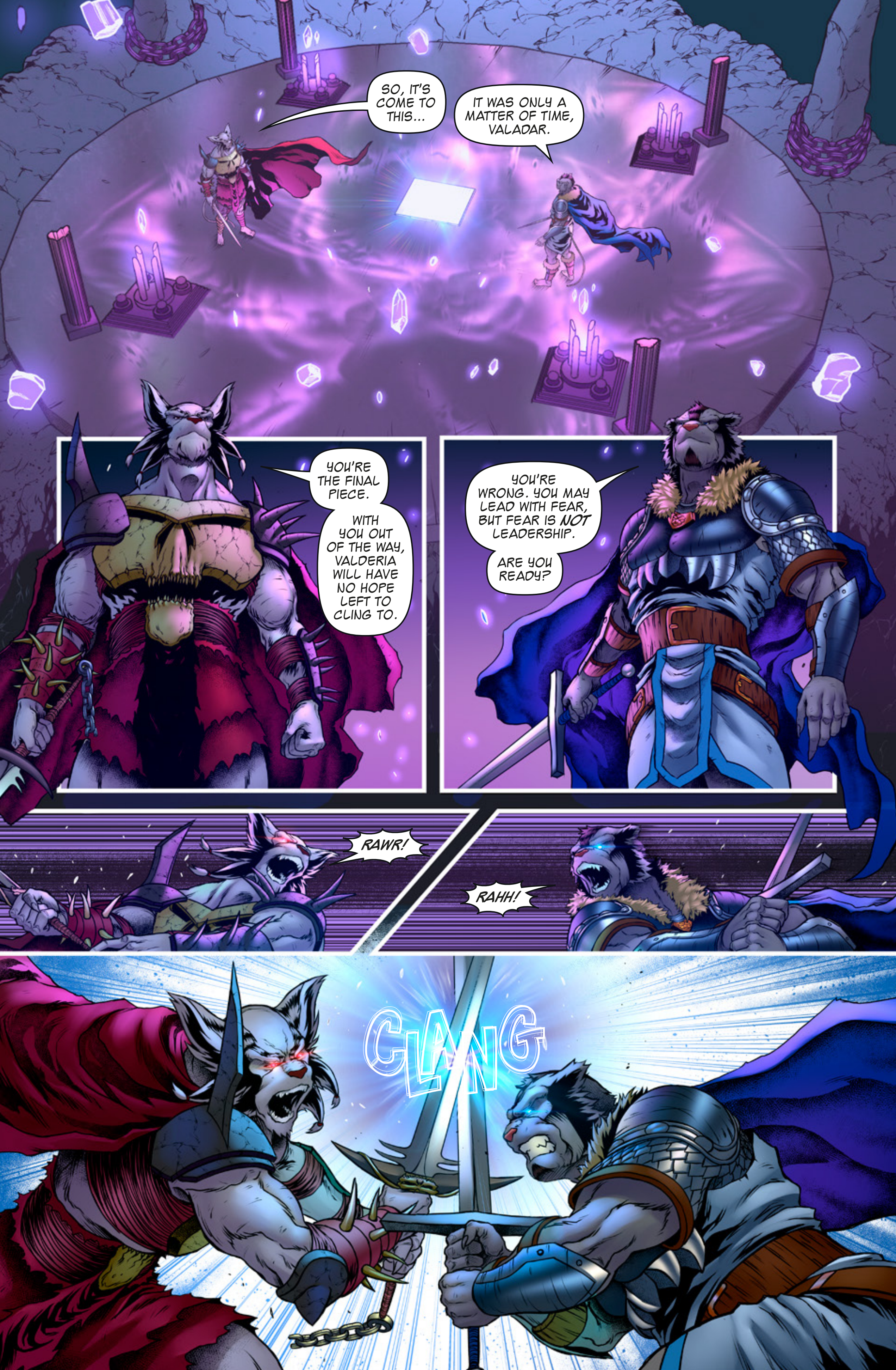

WE HAVE PREPARED FOR THISSS.
LEAVE IT UP TO THE UMBRA.
I'LL DO AS I PLEASE.
JARNOCH! GHEETA!
KILL THEM ALL!
YOU ARE RISKING EVERYTHING!
NO!!!
VA-VALADAR? GO-GONE?

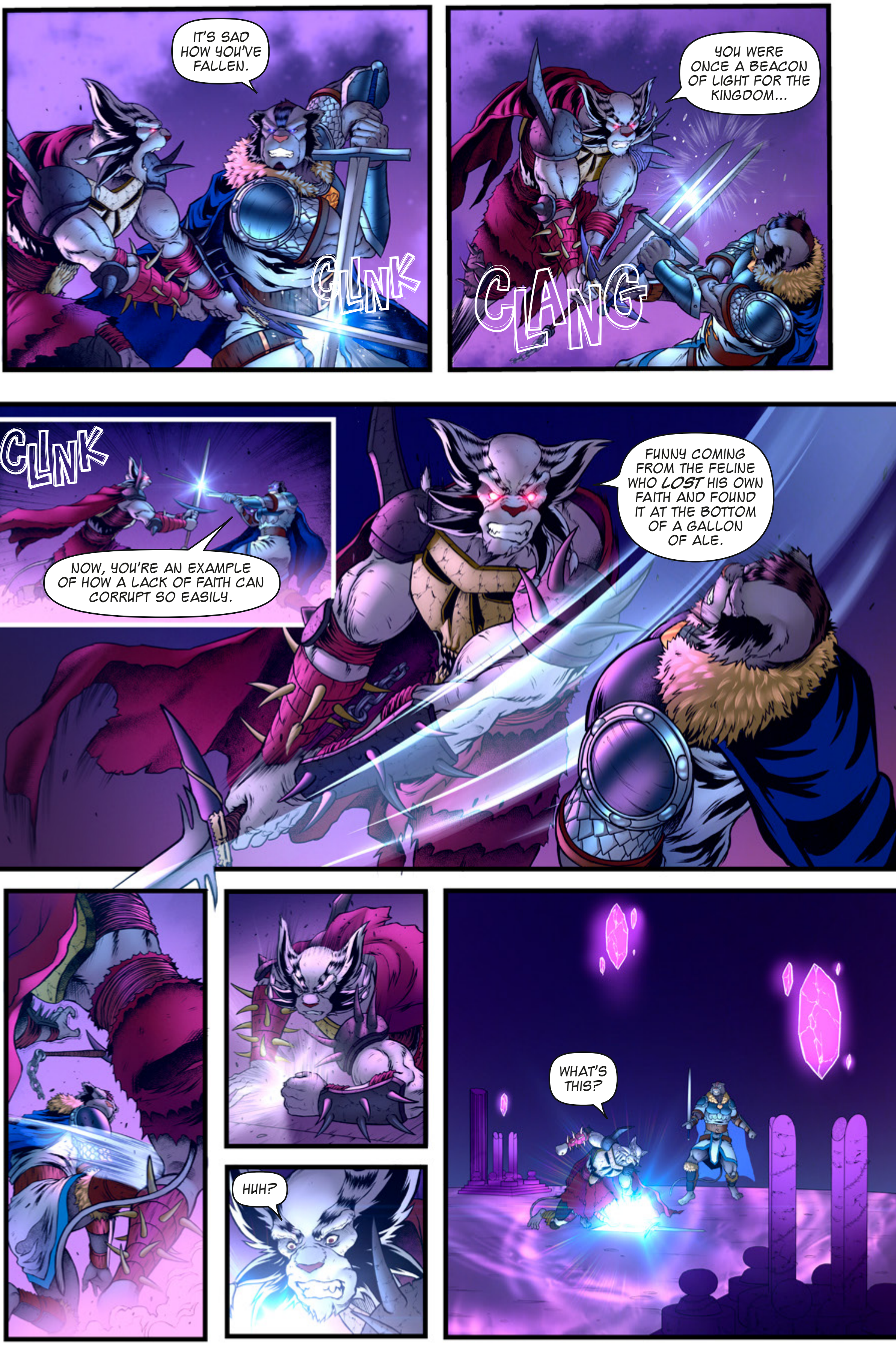

BATTLECATS, PROTECT NATHARIEN, AND MASTER RAUTAN.
MY QUEEN, I'D ADVISE YOU TO STAY OUT OF THIS FIGHT.
ARTAIN, TAKE THE QUEEN TO THE SAFETY BOAT.
NO HARM MUST COME--
I AM NOT LEAVING, KALEERA.
THIS FIGHT IS MINE AS MUCH AS IT'S YOURS.
VERY WELL.
BRACE FOR IMPACT.
THOOOM

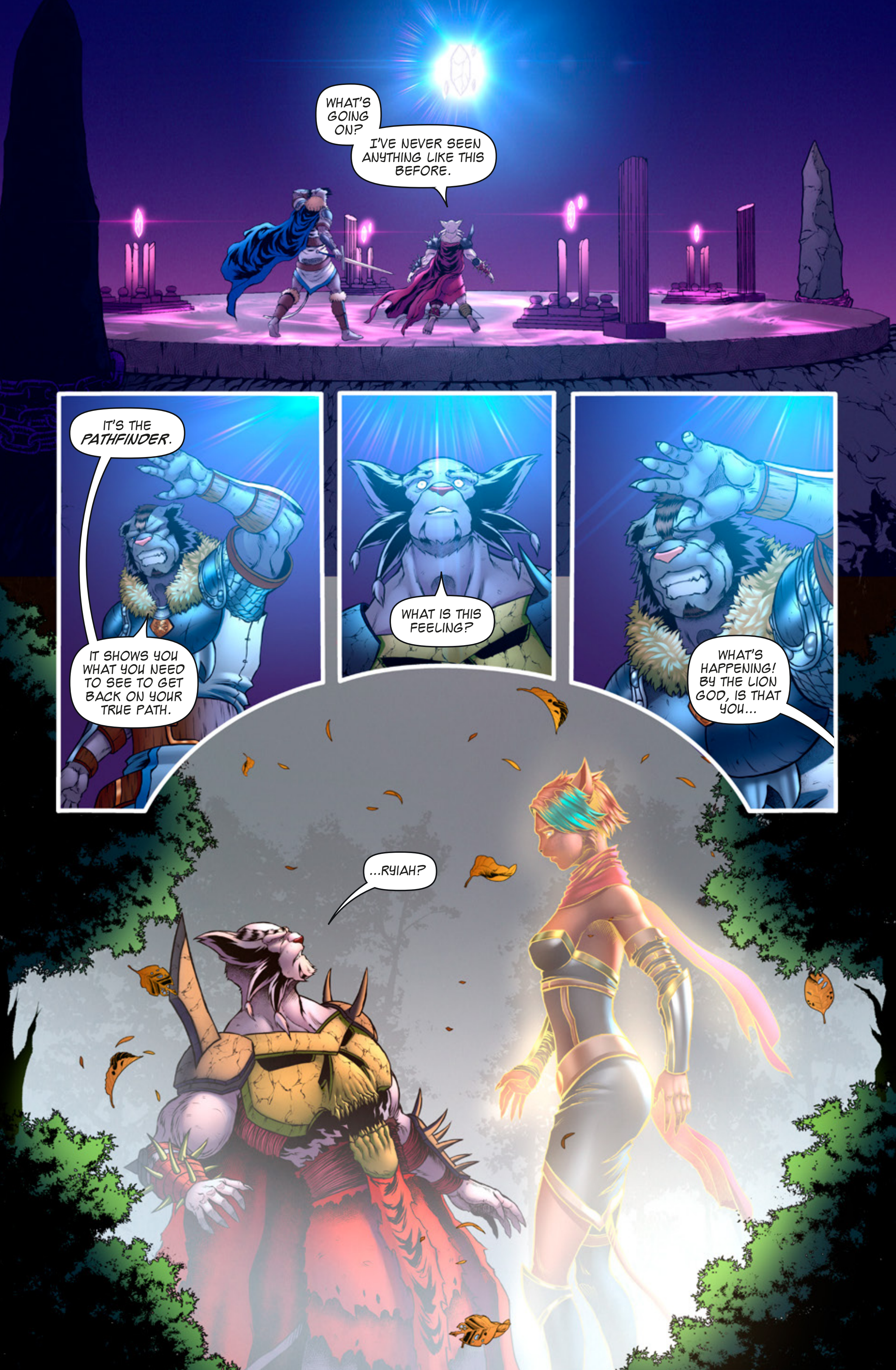



I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY FALL.
YOU WILL ATONE FOR YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS, GHEETA.
WEEEEEE!
SHADOW!
PUSH FORWARD!


BOOM
WHY ARE THE UGLIES--ALWAYS--SO--STRONG.
YOU ONCE MANAGED TO EVADE MY GRASP.
IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
ACK--


SO, IT'S COME TO THIS...
IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME, VALADAR.
YOU'RE THE FINAL PIECE.
WITH YOU OUT OF THE WAY, VALDERIA WILL HAVE NO HOPE LEFT TO CLING TO.
YOU'RE WRONG. YOU MAY LEAD WITH FEAR, BUT FEAR IS *NOT* LEADERSHIP.
ARE YOU READY?
RAWR!
RAHH!
CLANG


IT'S SAD HOW YOU'VE FALLEN.
CLINK
YOU WERE ONCE A BEACON OF LIGHT FOR THE KINGDOM...
CLANG
CLINK
NOW, YOU'RE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A LACK OF FAITH CAN CORRUPT SO EASILY.
FUNNY COMING FROM THE FELINE WHO *LOST* HIS OWN FAITH AND FOUND IT AT THE BOTTOM OF A GALLON OF ALE.
HUH?
WHAT'S THIS?

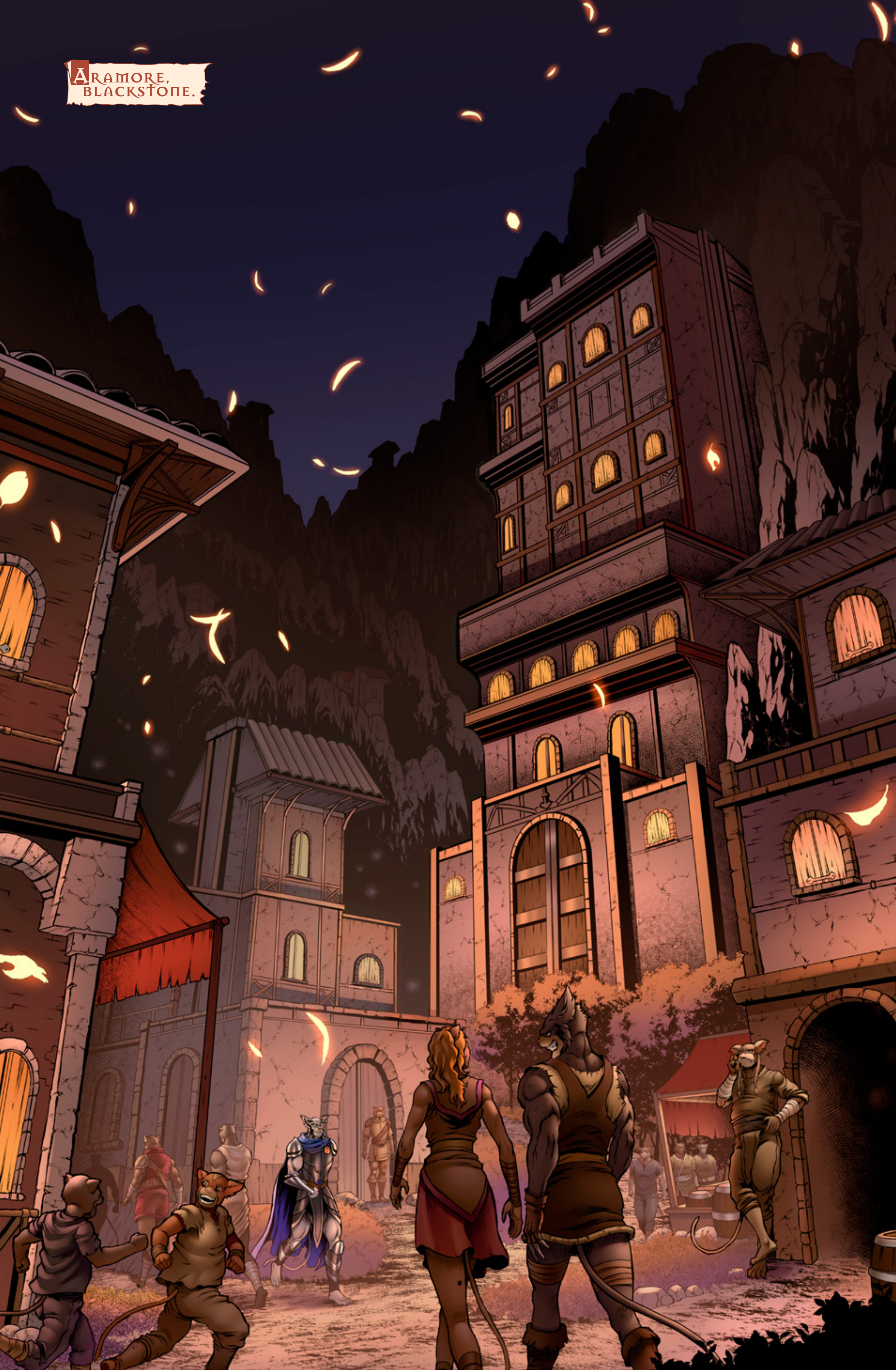

WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.
IT'S THE *PATHFINDER*.
IT SHOWS YOU WHAT YOU NEED TO SEE TO GET BACK ON YOUR TRUE PATH.
WHAT IS THIS FEELING?
WHAT'S HAPPENING! BY THE LION GOD, IS THAT YOU...
...RYIAH?

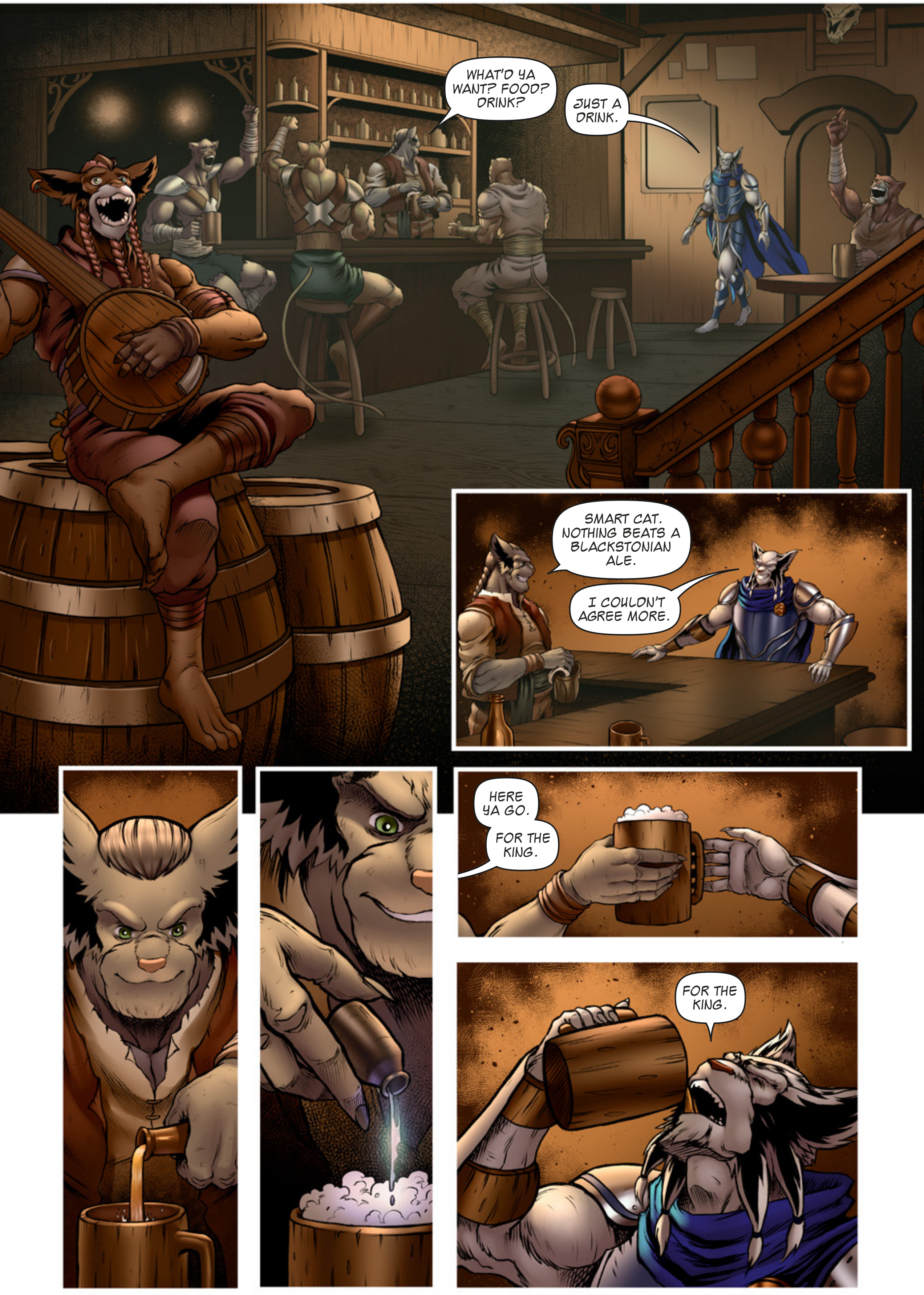
REVELATIONS

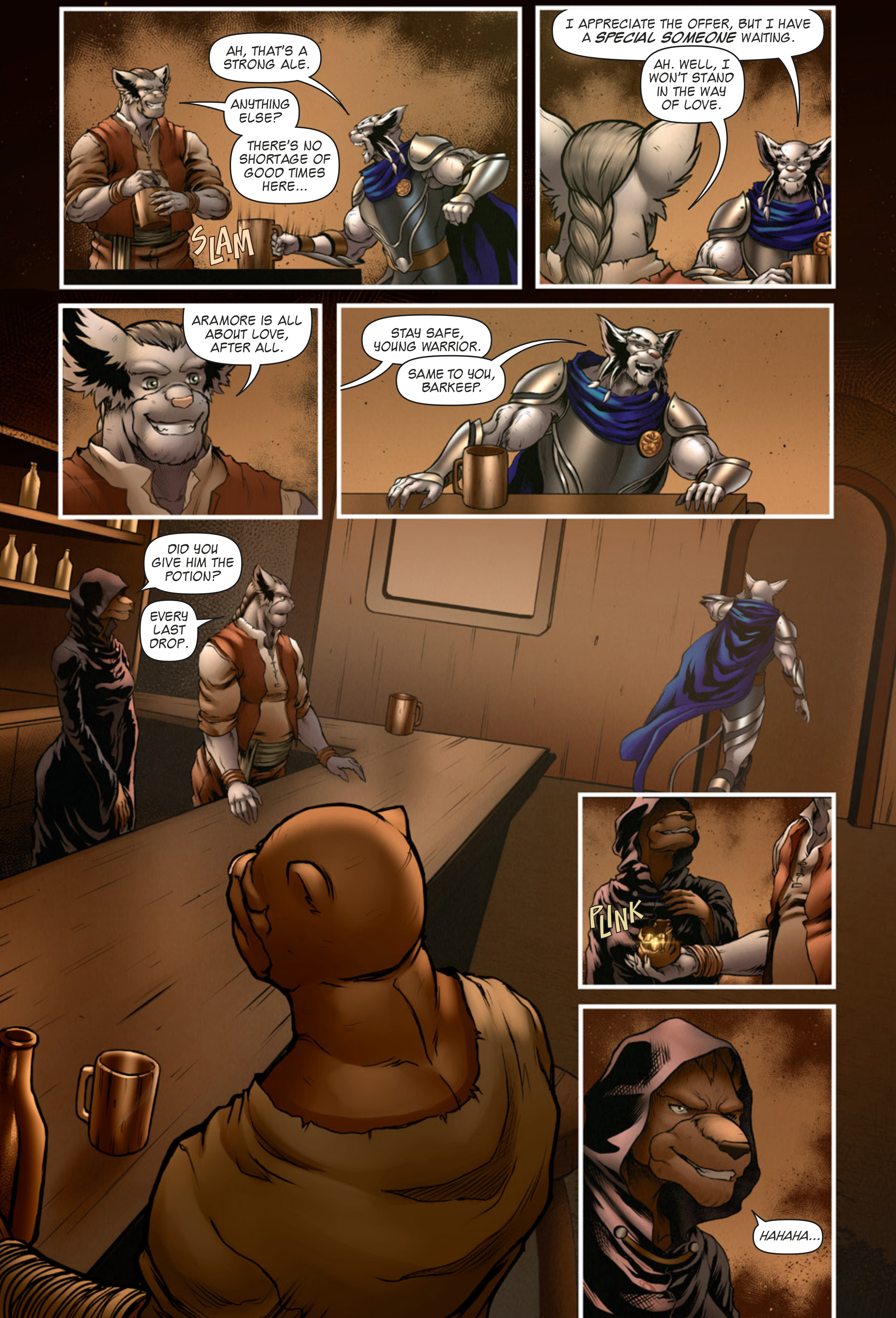
7

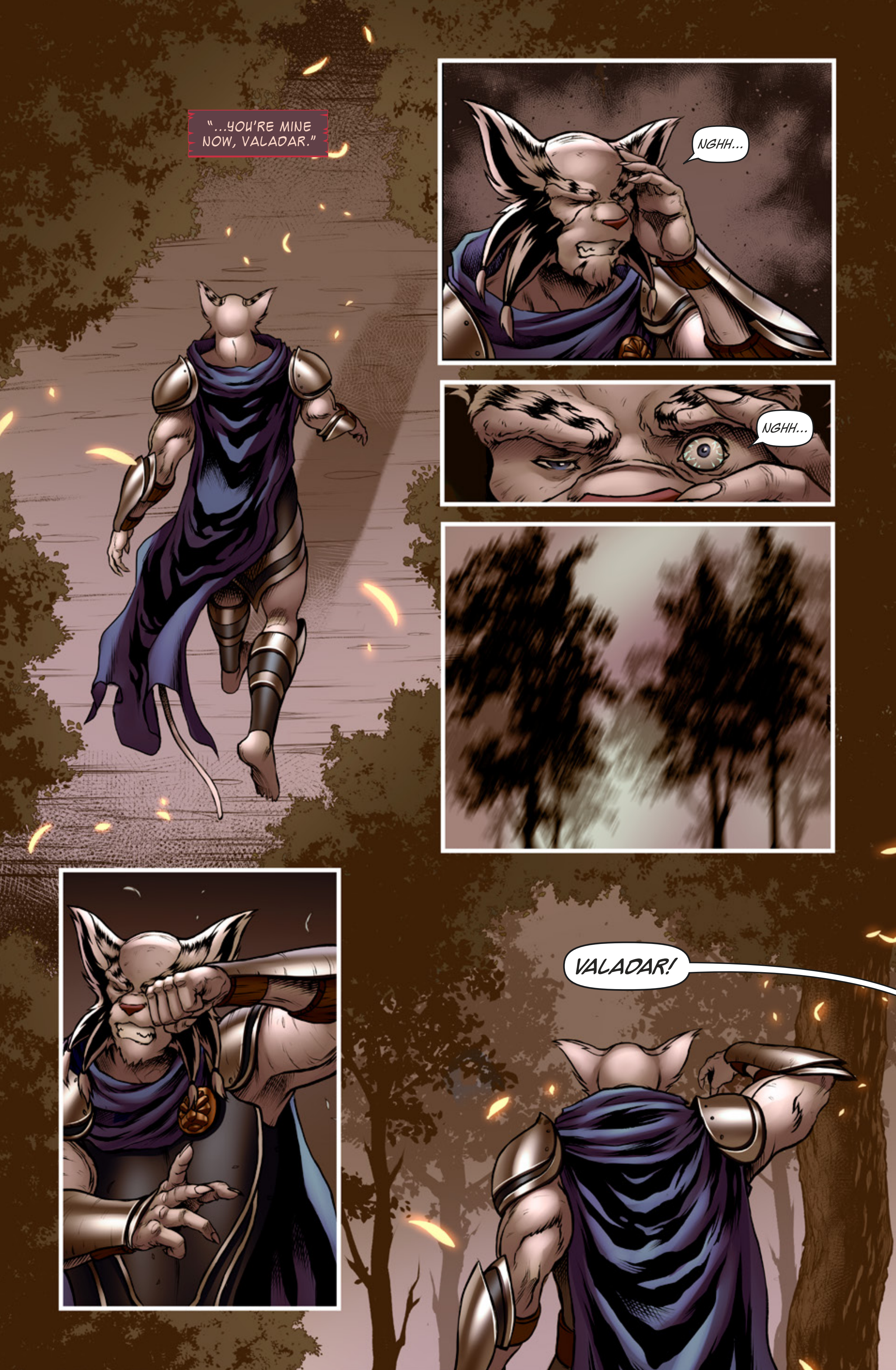
Chapter Seven

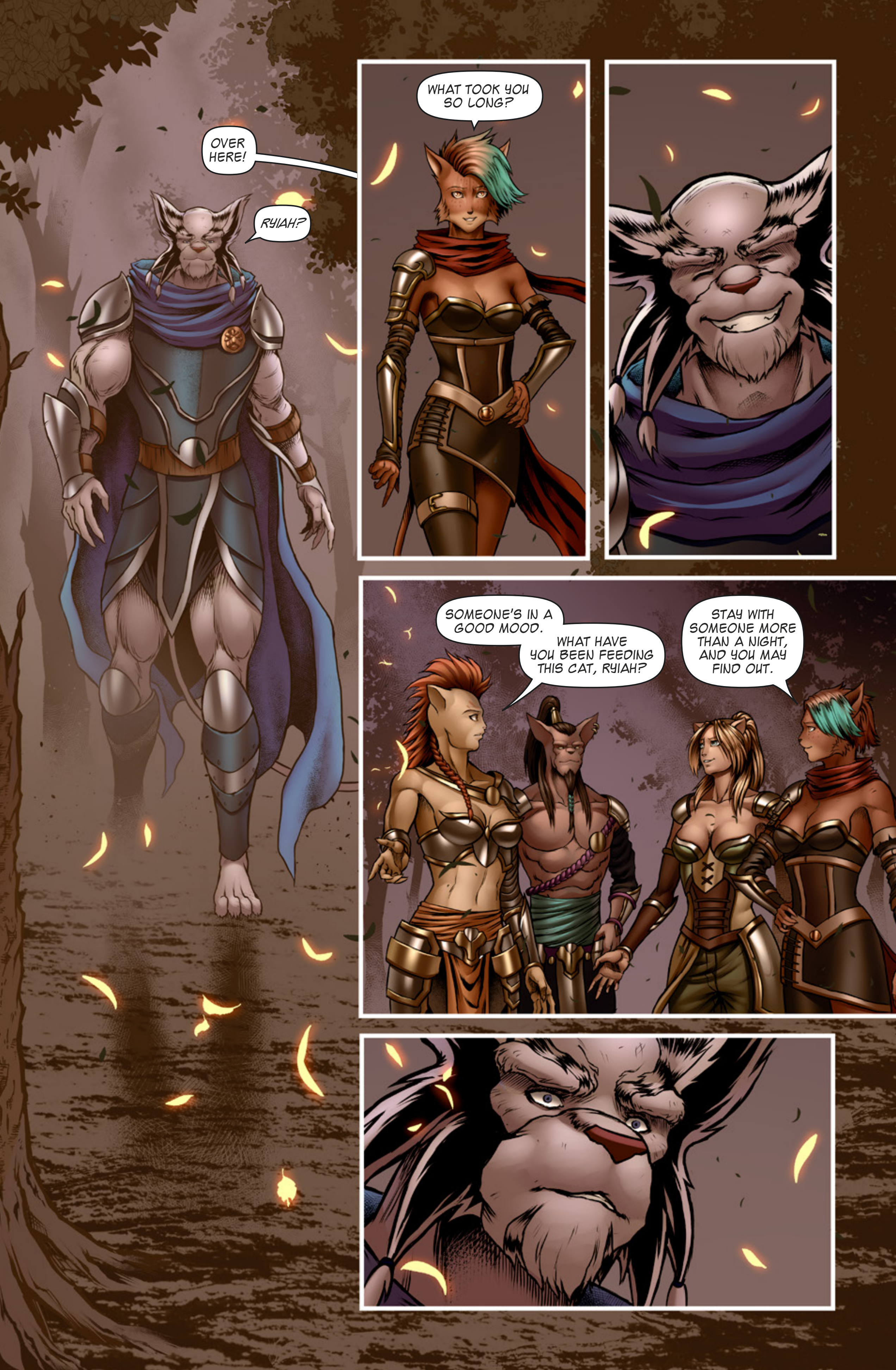
BATTLECATS®

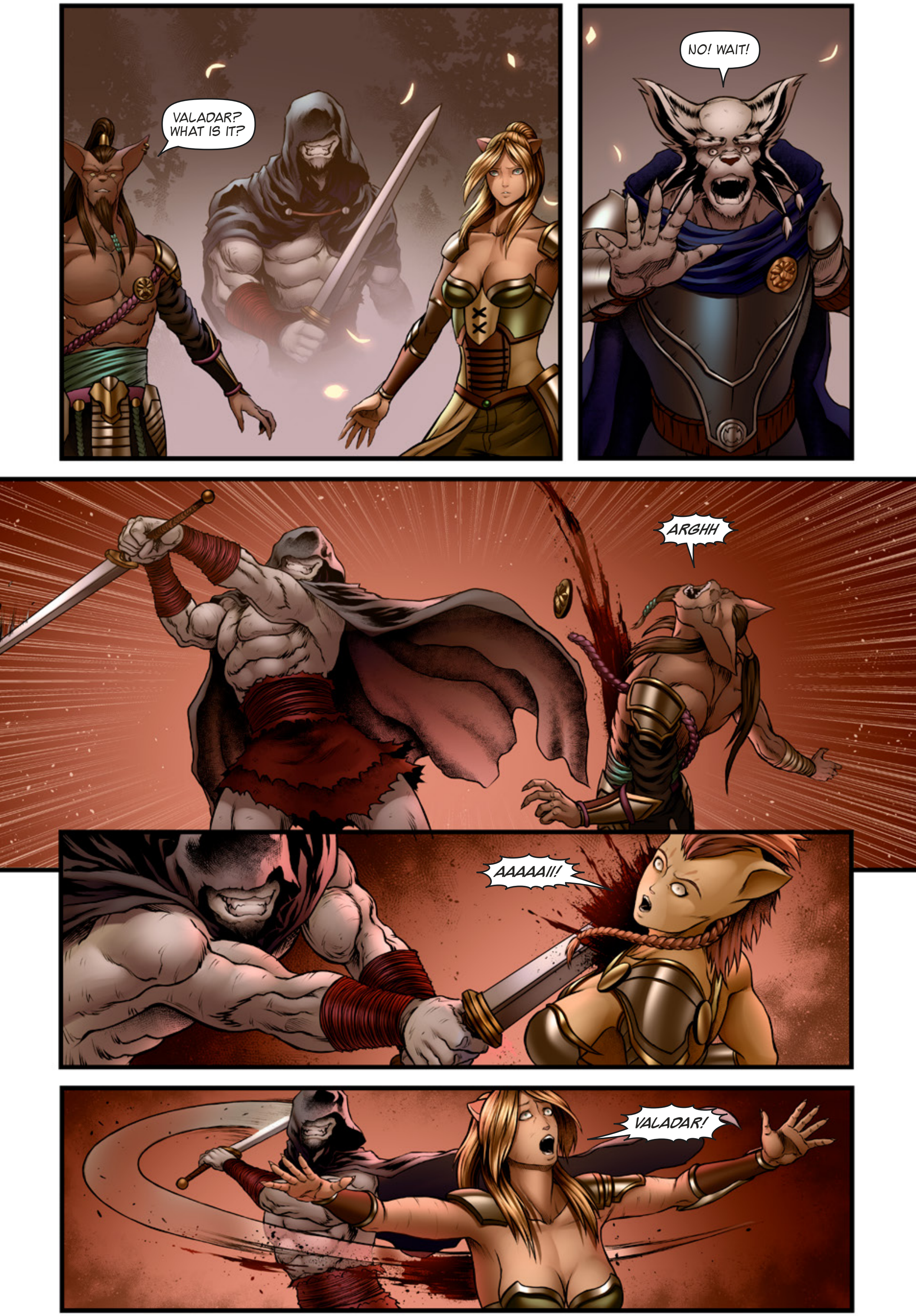

Aramore, Blackstone.

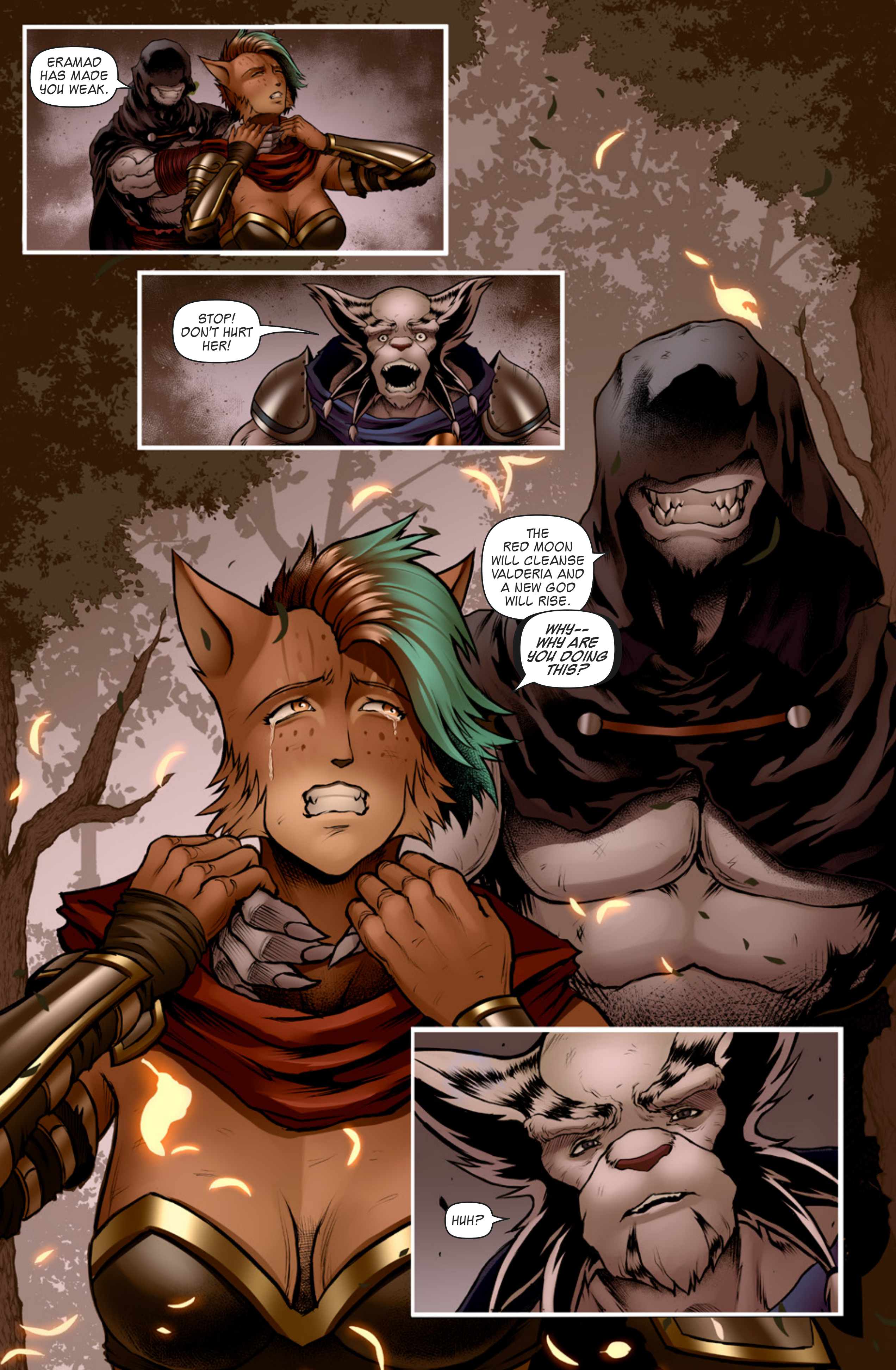

WHAT'D YA WANT? FOOD? DRINK?
JUST A DRINK.
SMART CAT. NOTHING BEATS A BLACKSTONIAN ALE.
I COULDN'T AGREE MORE.
HERE YA GO.
FOR THE KING.
FOR THE KING.

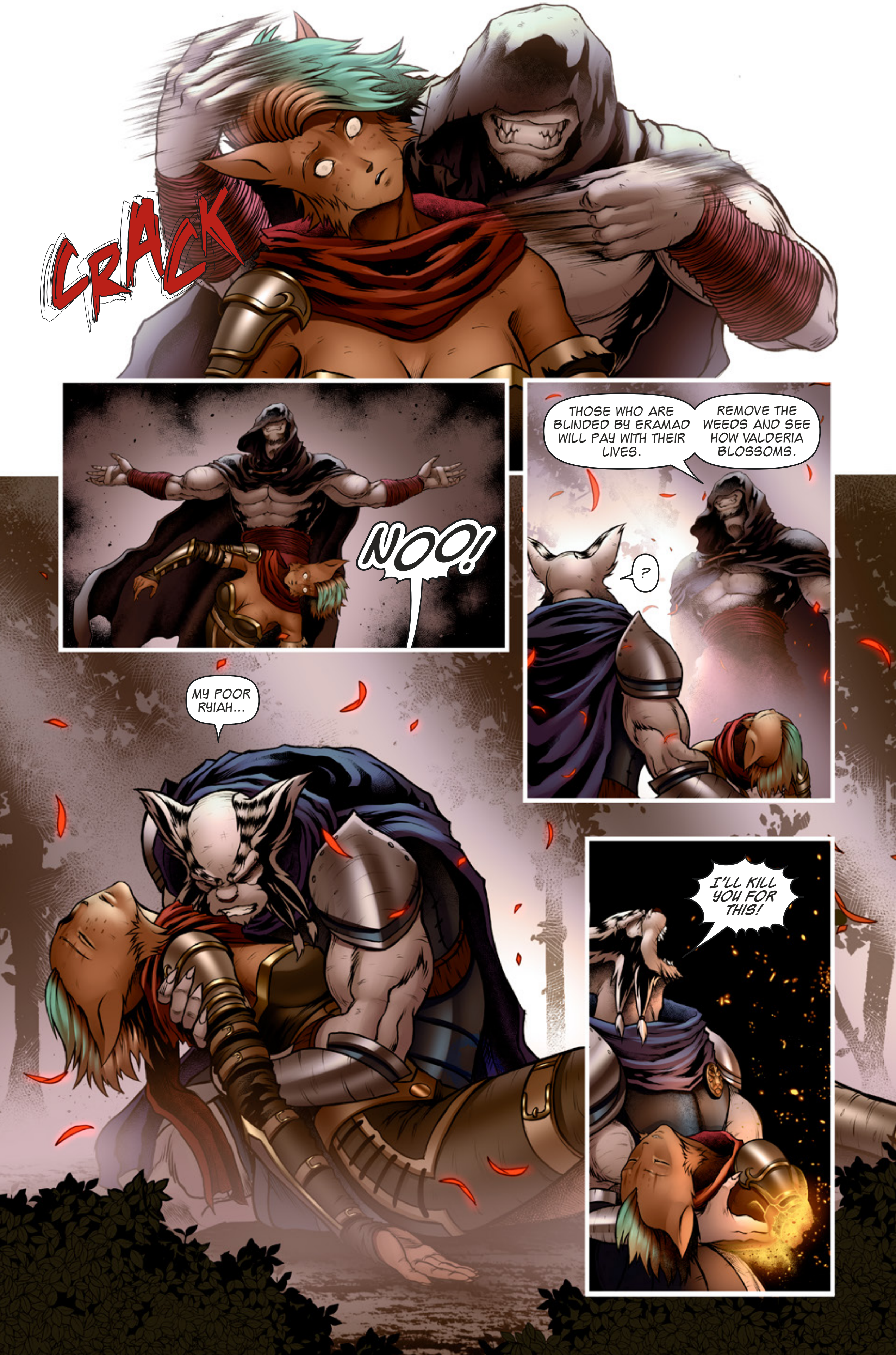

AH, THAT'S A STRONG ALE.
ANYTHING ELSE?
THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF GOOD TIMES HERE...
SLAM
I APPRECIATE THE OFFER, BUT I HAVE A *SPECIAL SOMEONE* WAITING.
AH. WELL, I WON'T STAND IN THE WAY OF LOVE.
ARAMORE IS ALL ABOUT LOVE, AFTER ALL.
STAY SAFE, YOUNG WARRIOR.
SAME TO YOU, BARKEEP.
DID YOU GIVE HIM THE POTION?
EVERY LAST DROP.
PLINK
HAHAHA...

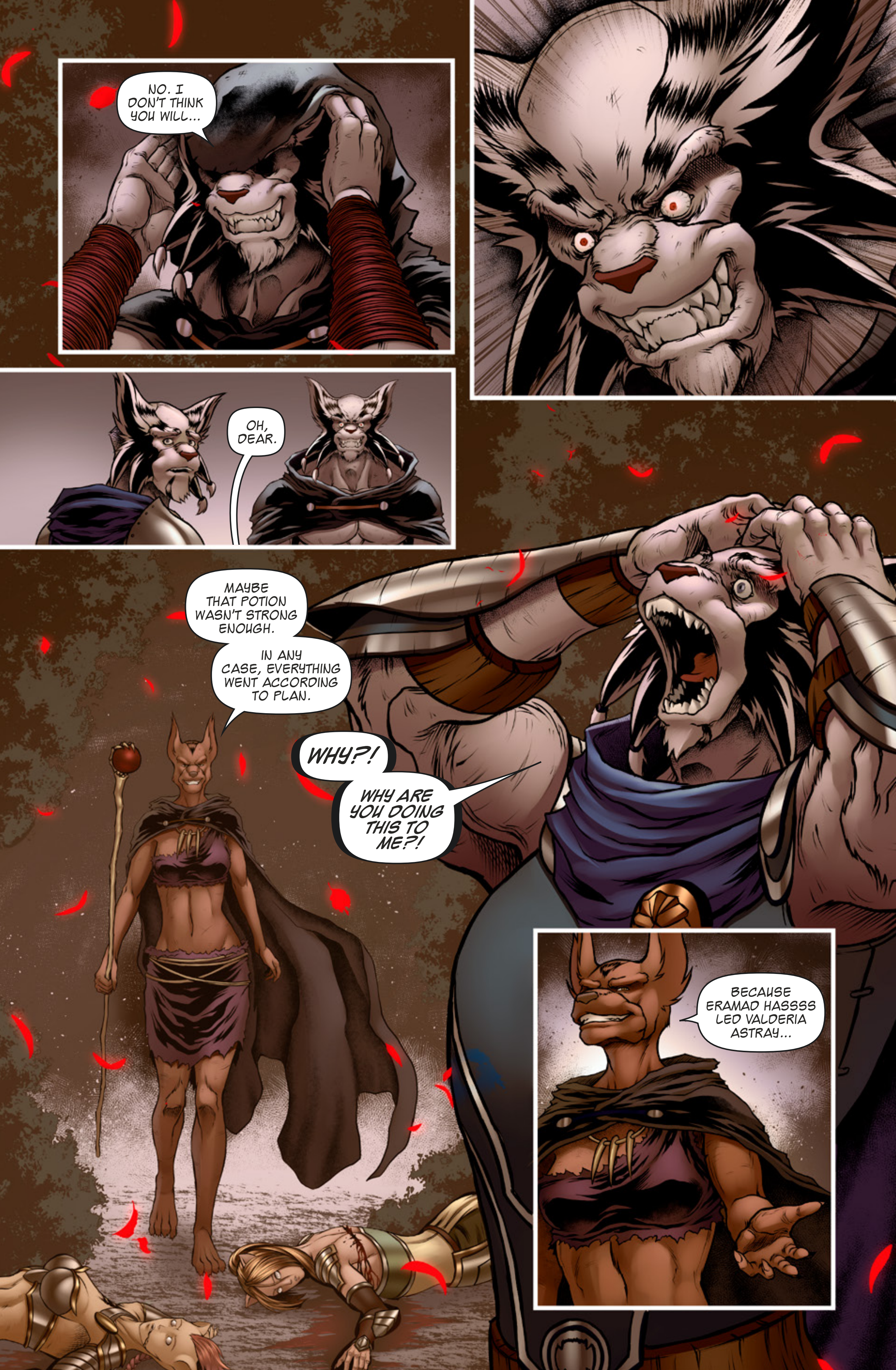

"...YOU'RE MINE NOW, VALADAR."
NGHH...
NGHH...
VALADAR!

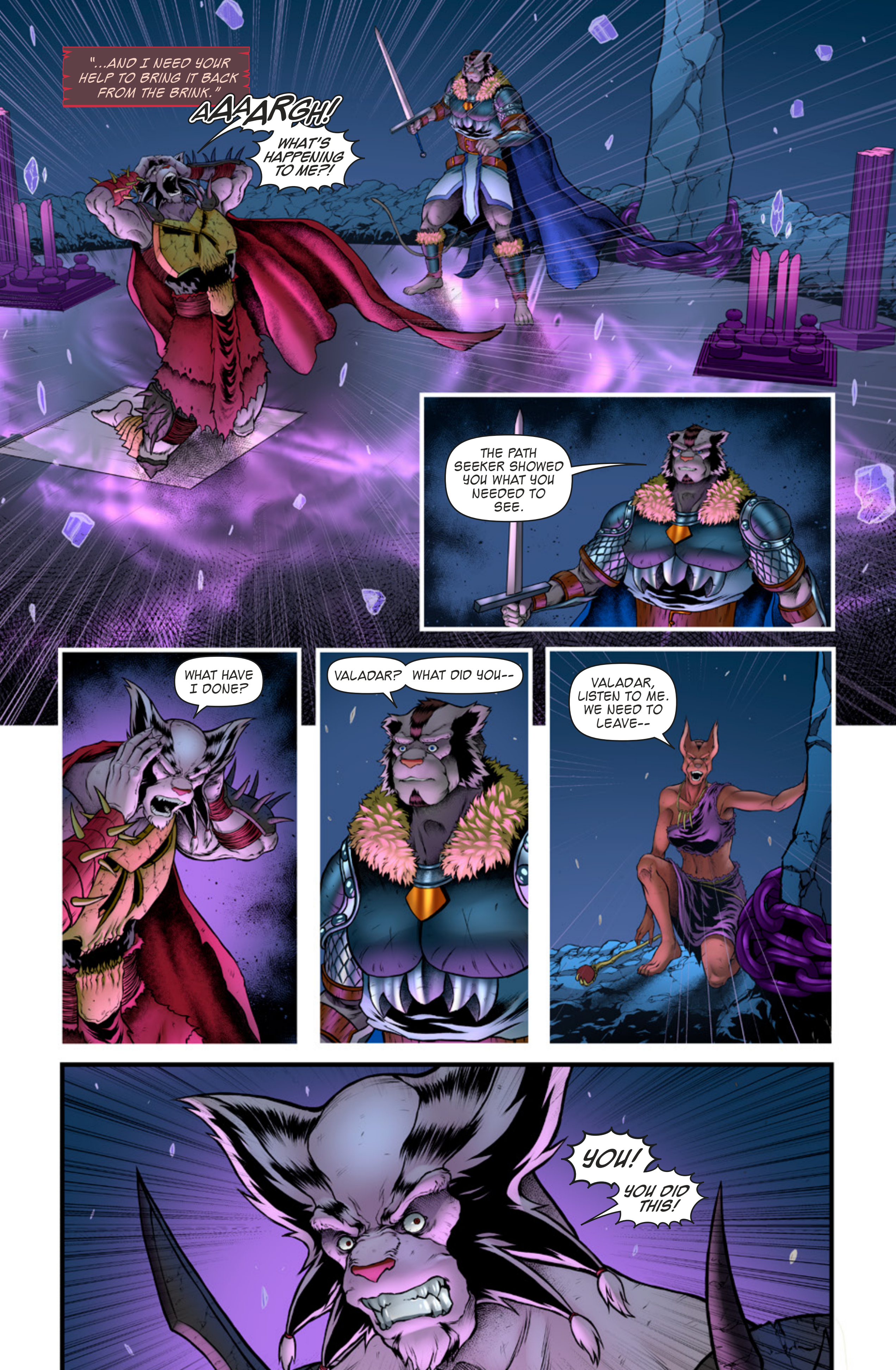

OVER HERE!
RYIAH?
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
SOMEONE'S IN A GOOD MOOD.
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN FEEDING THIS CAT, RYIAH?
STAY WITH SOMEONE MORE THAN A NIGHT, AND YOU MAY FIND OUT.

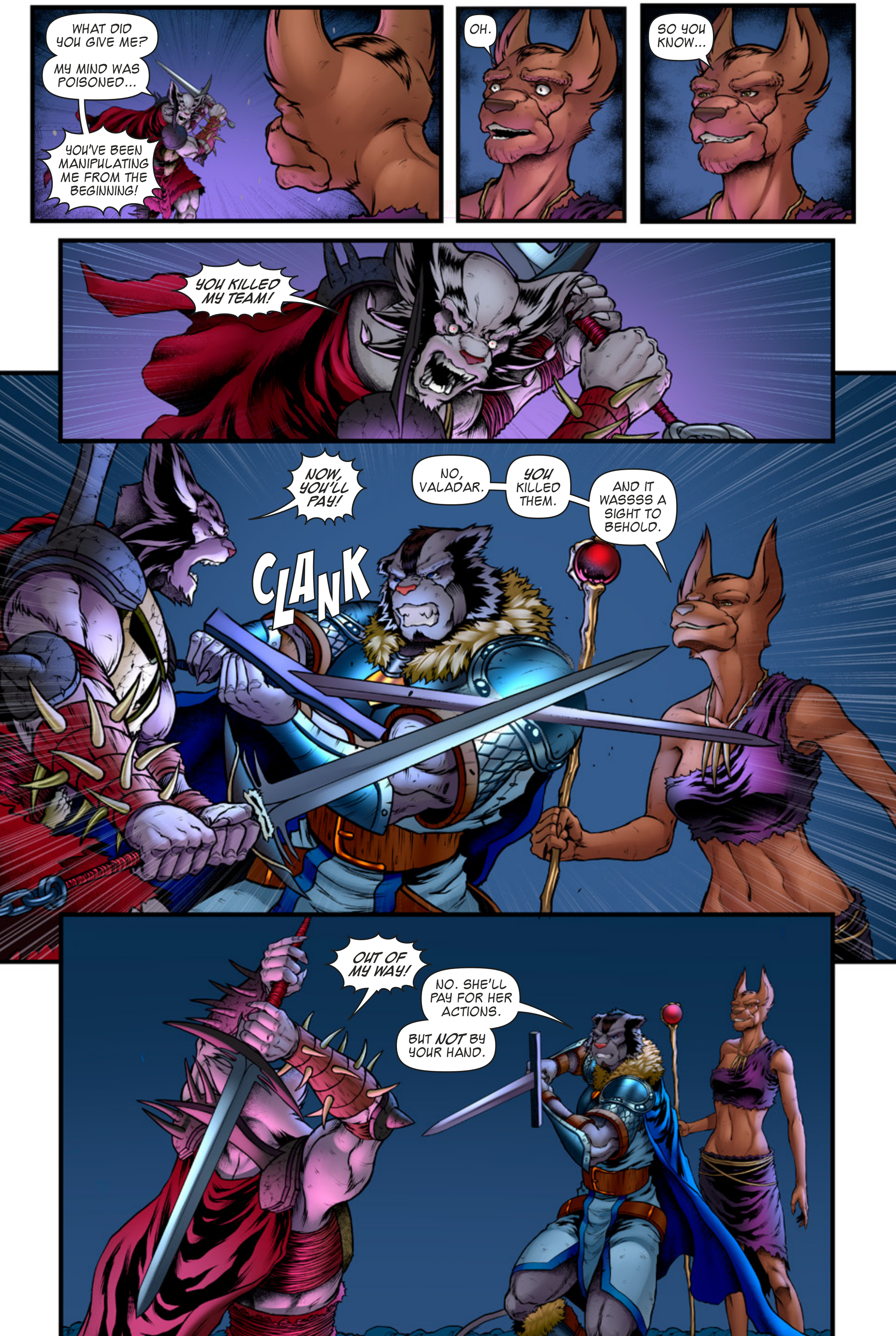

VALADAR? WHAT IS IT?
NO! WAIT!
ARGHH
AAAAAII!
VALADAR!

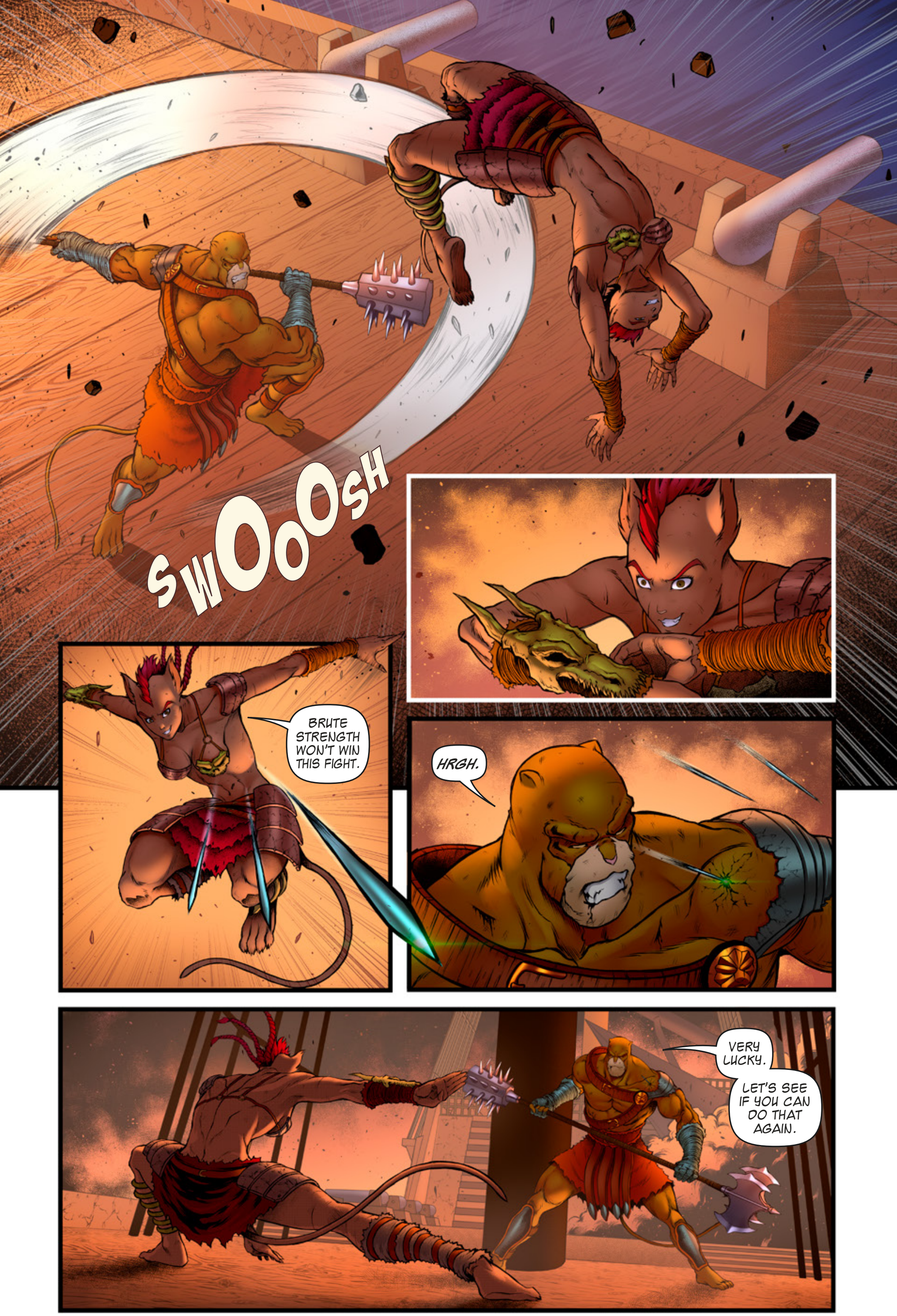

ERAMAD HAS MADE YOU WEAK.
STOP! DON'T HURT HER!
THE RED MOON WILL CLEANSE VALDERIA AND A NEW GOD WILL RISE.
WHY-- WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
HUH?

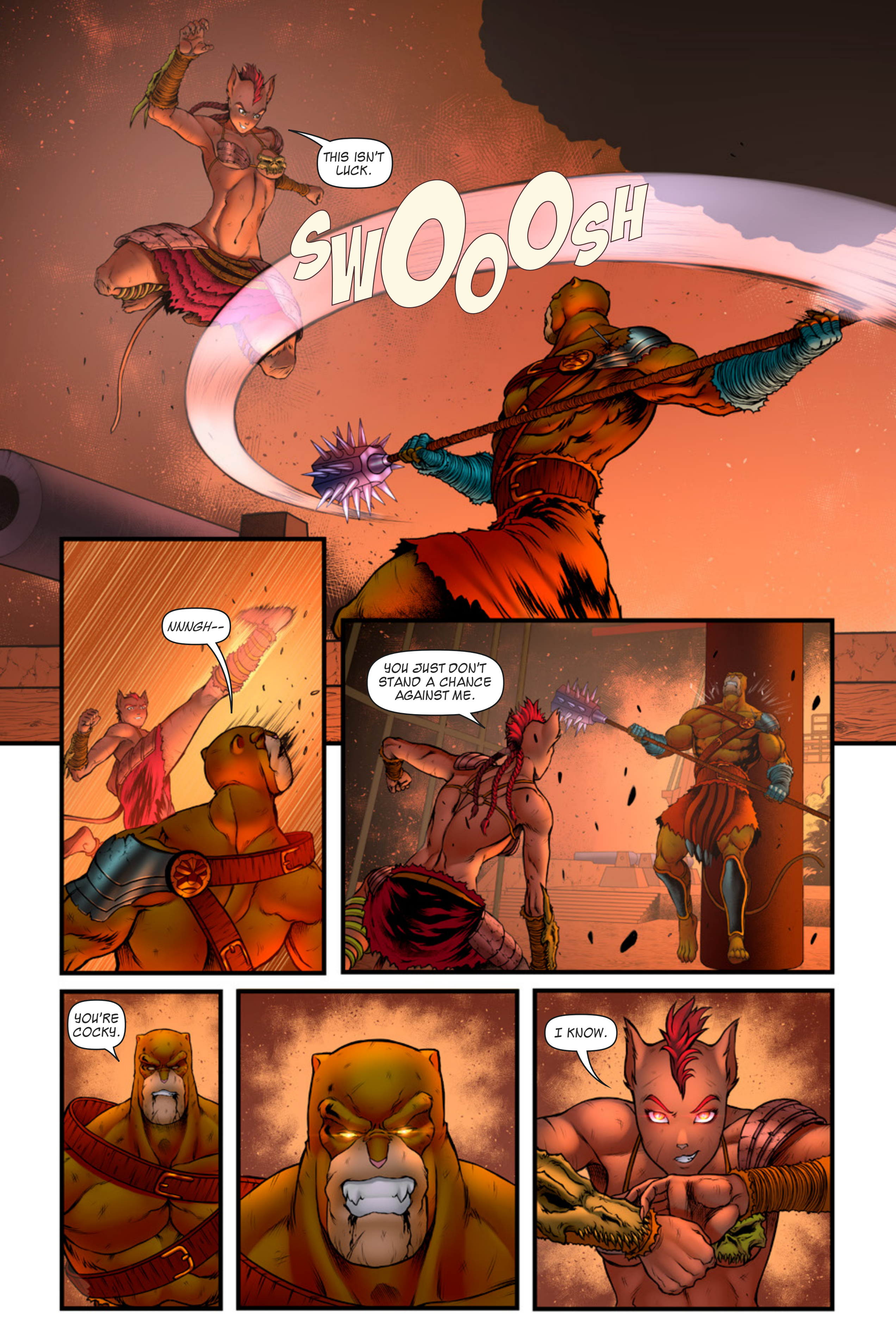

CRACK
NOO!
THOSE WHO ARE BLINDED BY ERAMAD WILL PAY WITH THEIR LIVES.
REMOVE THE WEEDS AND SEE HOW VALDERIA BLOSSOMS.
?
MY POOR RYIAH...
I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS!

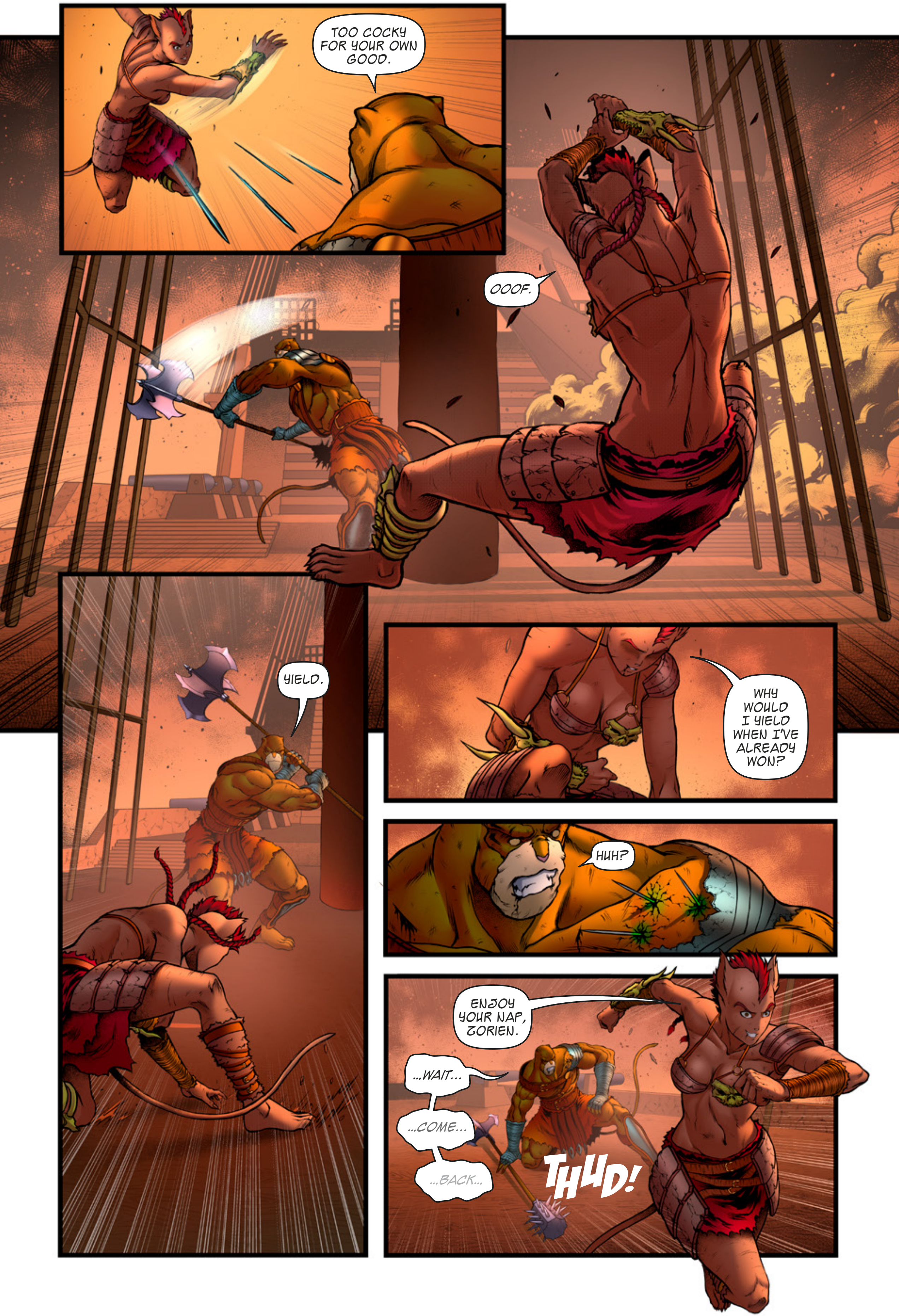

NO. I DON'T THINK YOU WILL...
OH, DEAR.
MAYBE THAT POTION WASN'T STRONG ENOUGH.
IN ANY CASE, EVERYTHING WENT ACCORDING TO PLAN.
WHY?!
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME?!
BECAUSE ERAMAD HASSSS LED VALDERIA ASTRAY...

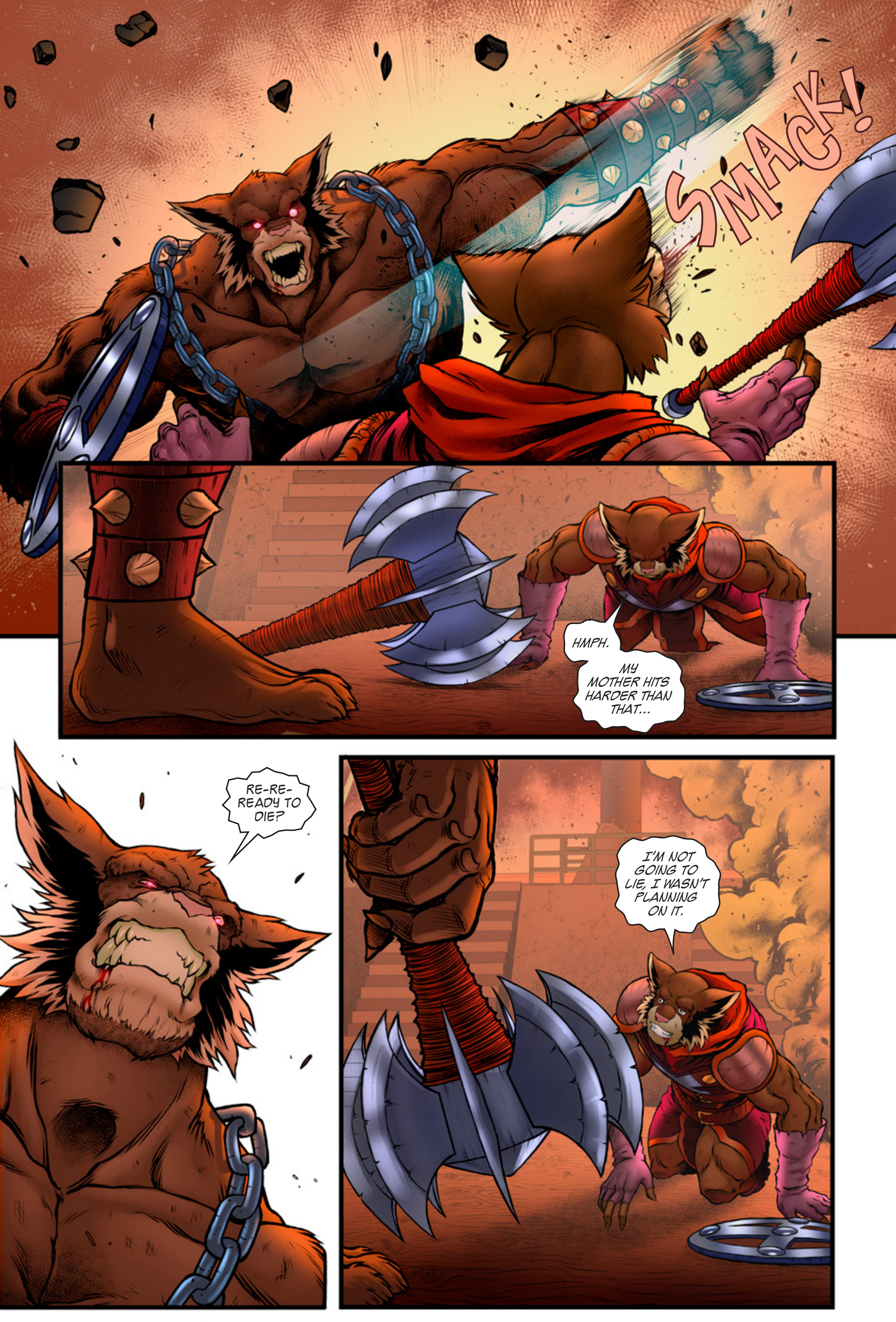

"...AND I NEED YOUR HELP TO BRING IT BACK FROM THE BRINK."
AAAARGH!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!
THE PATH SEEKER SHOWED YOU WHAT YOU NEEDED TO SEE.
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
VALADAR?
WHAT DID YOU--
VALADAR, LISTEN TO ME. WE NEED TO LEAVE--
YOU!
YOU DID THIS!

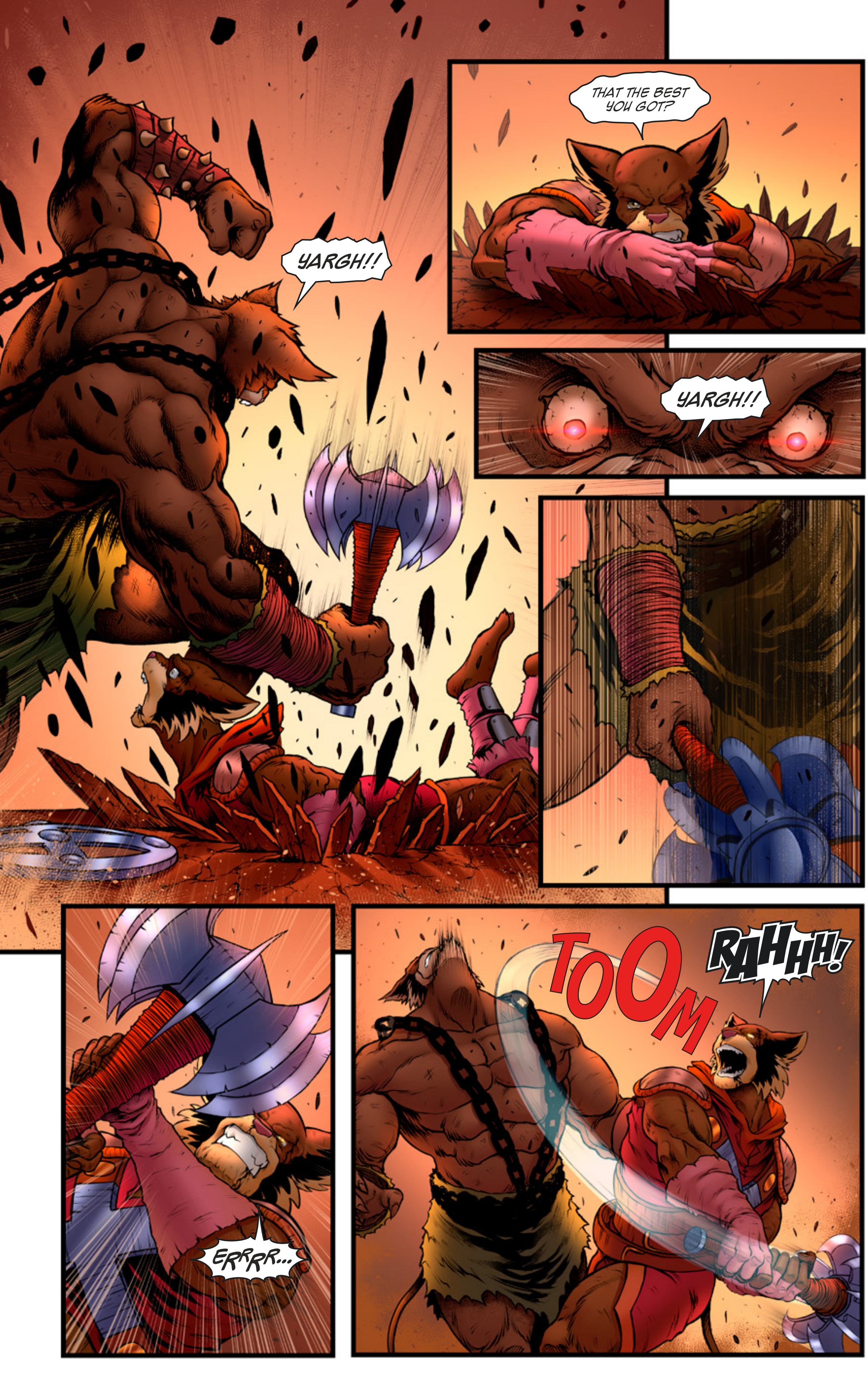

WHAT DID YOU GIVE ME?
MY MIND WAS POISONED...
YOU'VE BEEN MANIPULATING ME FROM THE BEGINNING!
OH.
SO YOU KNOW...
YOU KILLED MY TEAM!
NOW, YOU'LL PAY!
CLANK
NO, VALADAR.
YOU KILLED THEM.
AND IT WASSSS A SIGHT TO BEHOLD.
OUT OF MY WAY!
NO. SHE'LL PAY FOR HER ACTIONS.
BUT NOT BY YOUR HAND.

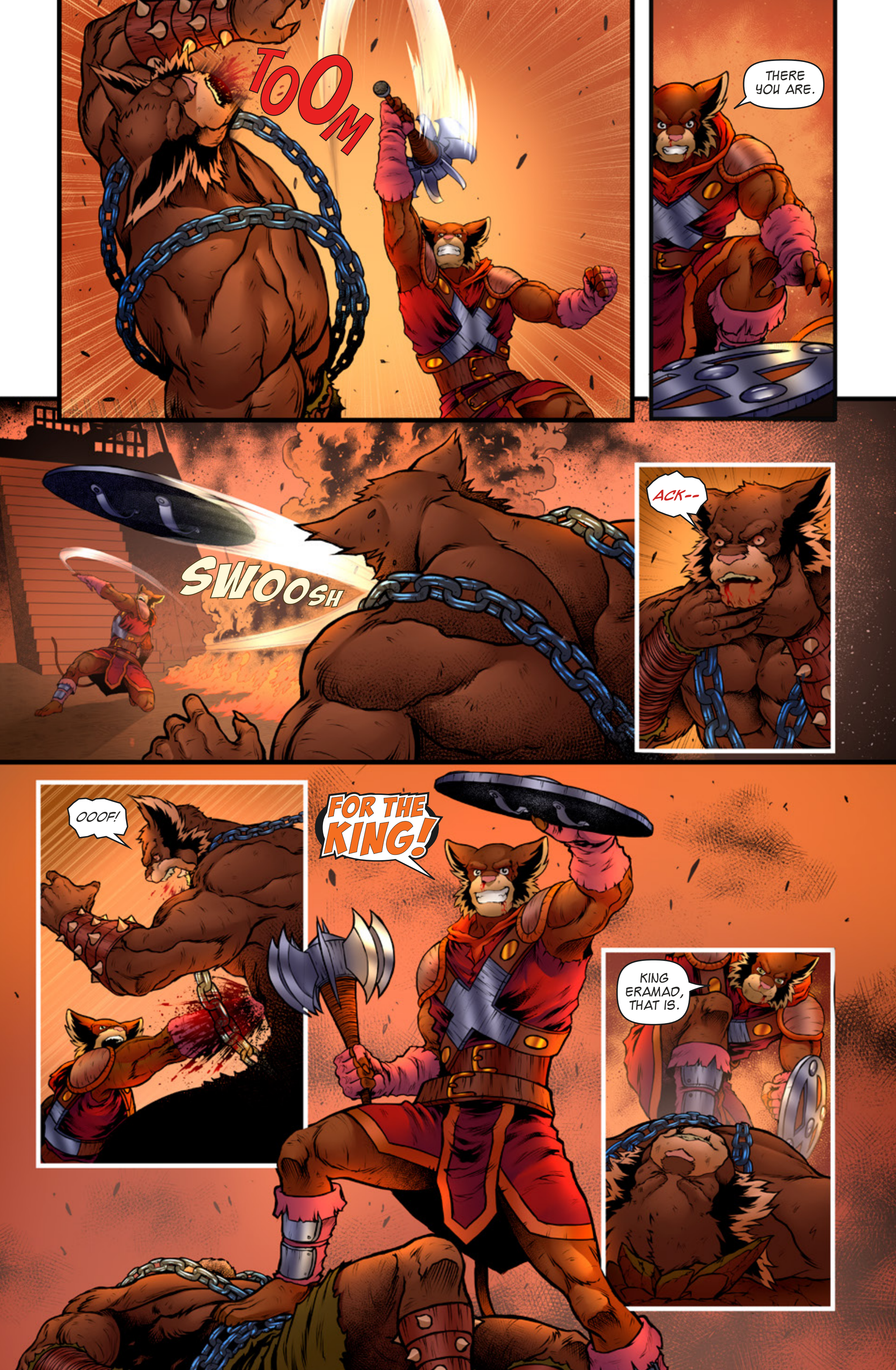

SWOOOSH
BRUTE STRENGTH WON'T WIN THIS FIGHT.
HRGH.
VERY LUCKY.
LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN DO THAT AGAIN.

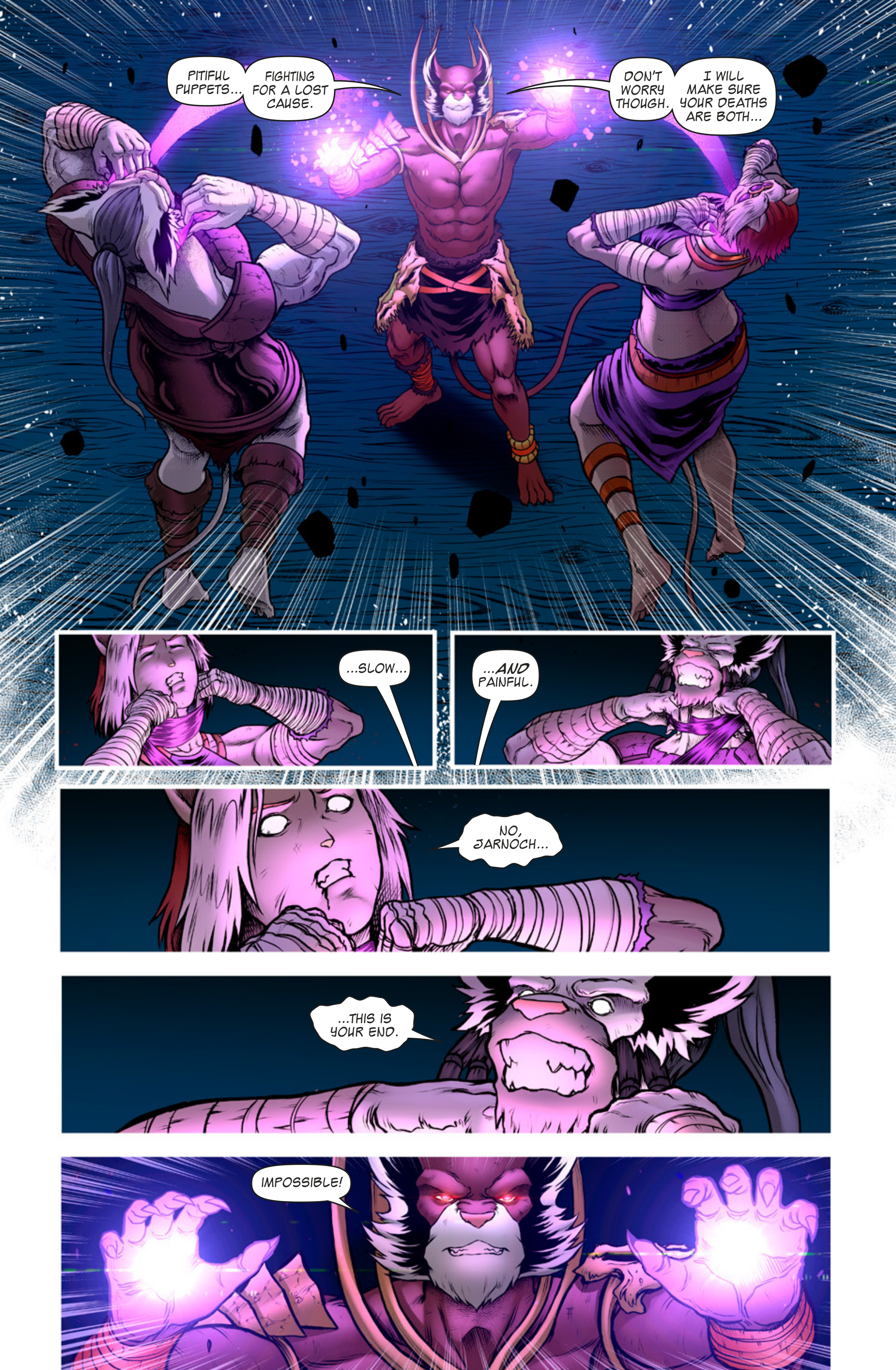

THIS ISN'T LUCK.
SWOOOOSH
NNNGH--
YOU JUST DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST ME.
YOU'RE COCKY.
I KNOW.

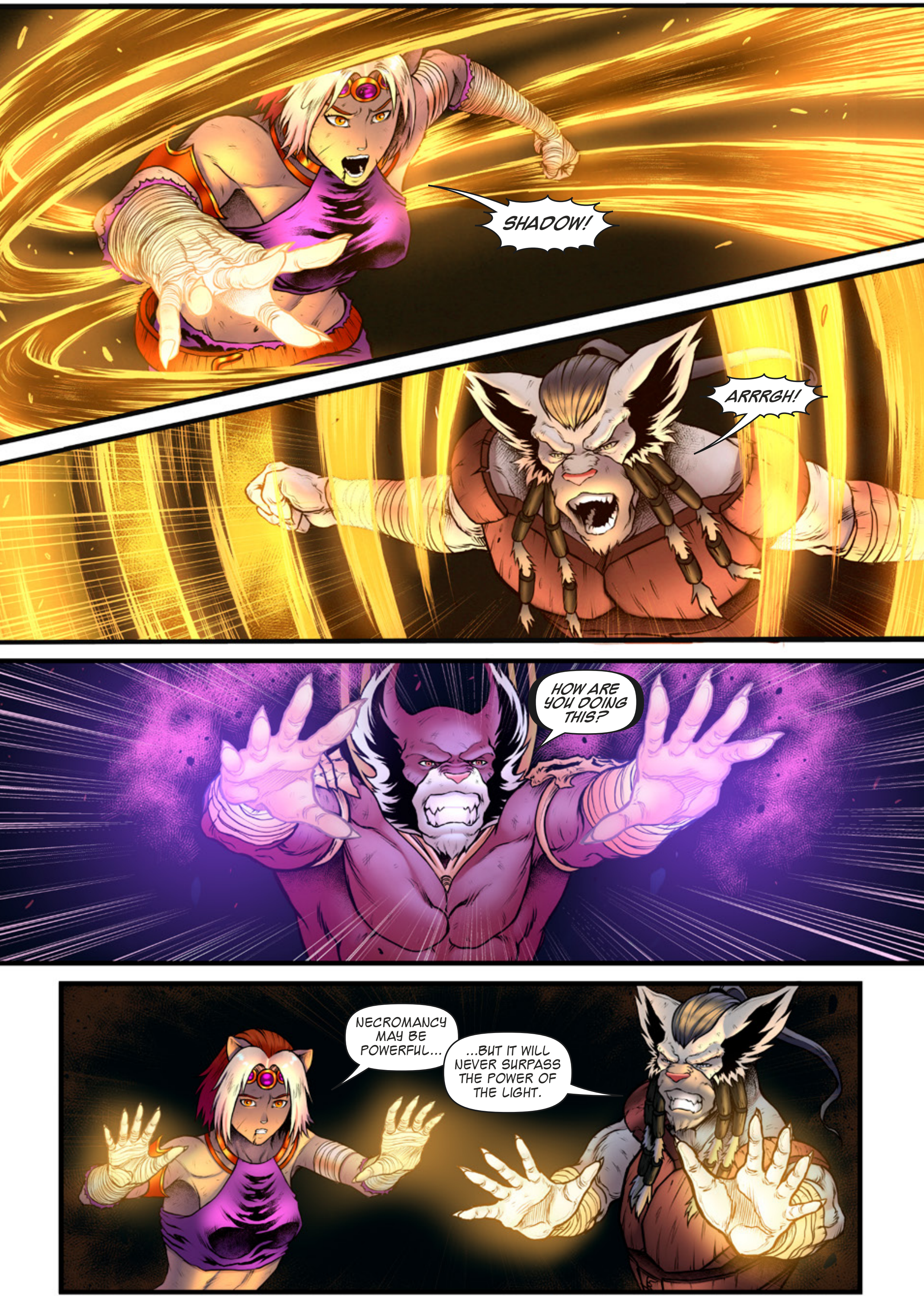

TOO COCKY FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
OOOF.
YIELD.
WHY WOULD I YIELD WHEN I'VE ALREADY WON?
HUH?
ENJOY YOUR NAP, ZORIEN.
...WAIT...
...COME...
...BACK...
THUD!

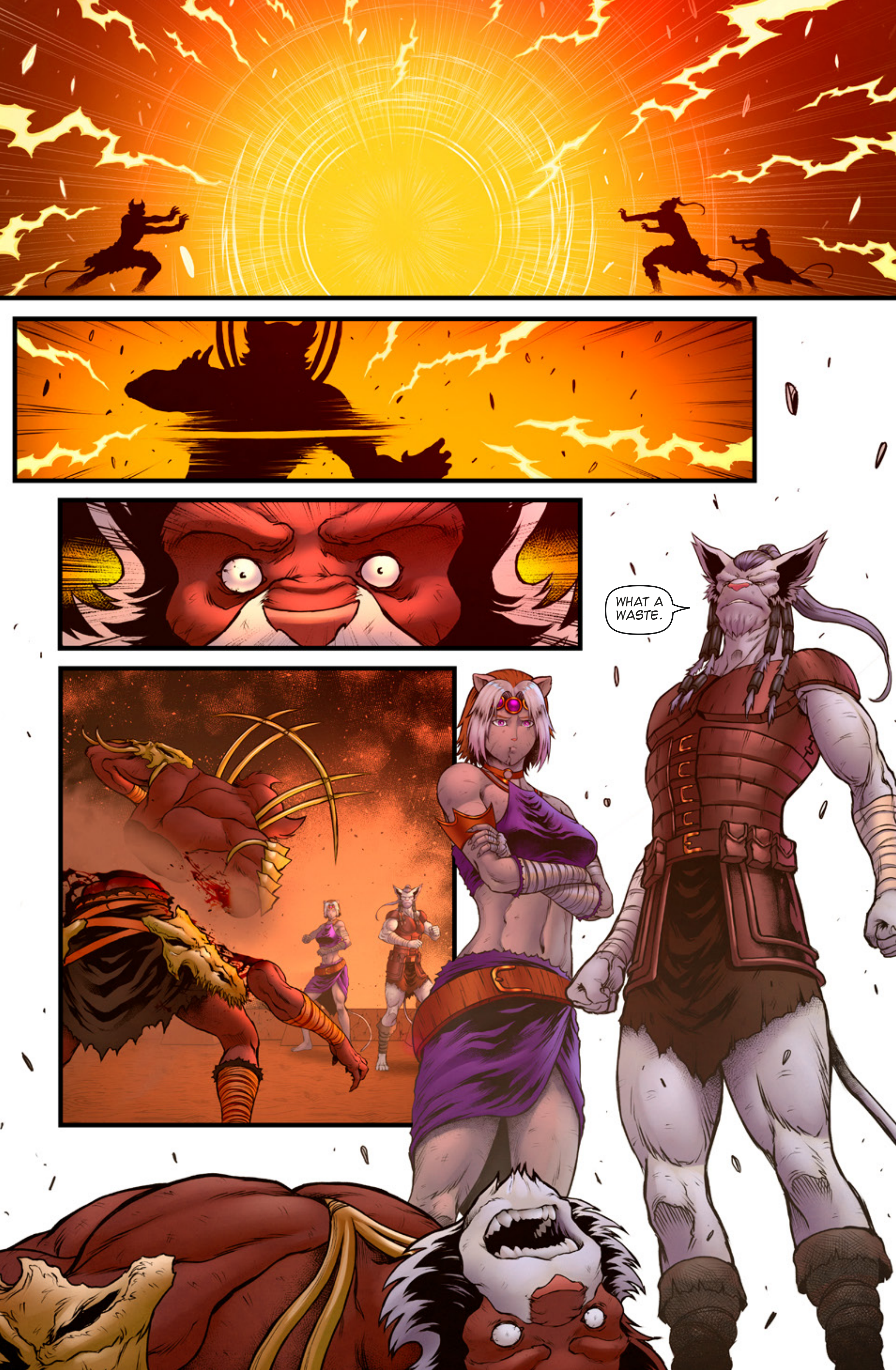

SMACK!
HMPH.
MY MOTHER HITS HARDER THAN THAT...
RE-RE-READY TO DIE?
I'M NOT GOING TO LIE, I WASN'T PLANNING ON IT.

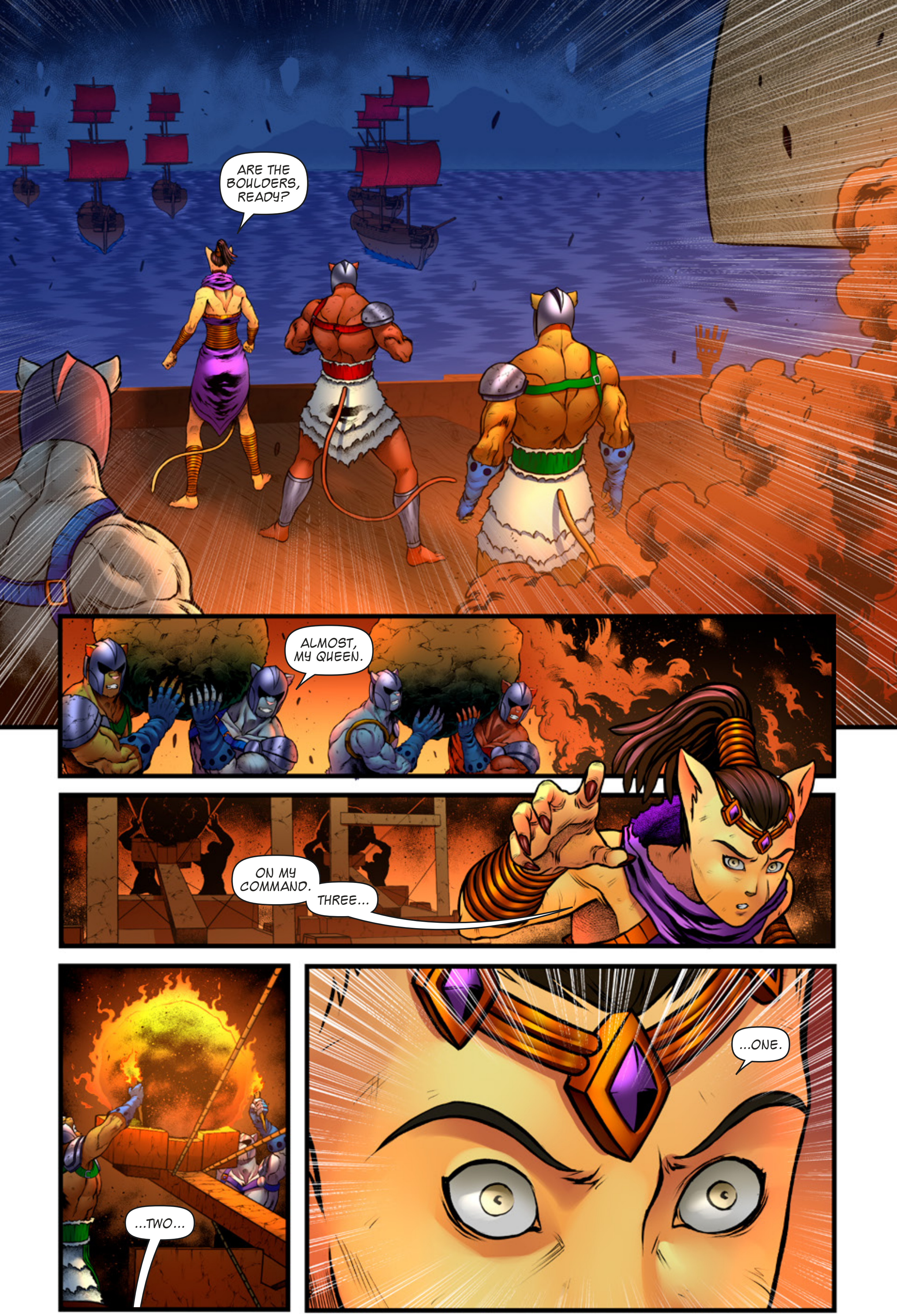

YARGH!!
THAT THE BEST YOU GOT?
YARGH!!
ERRRR...
TOOM
RAHHH!

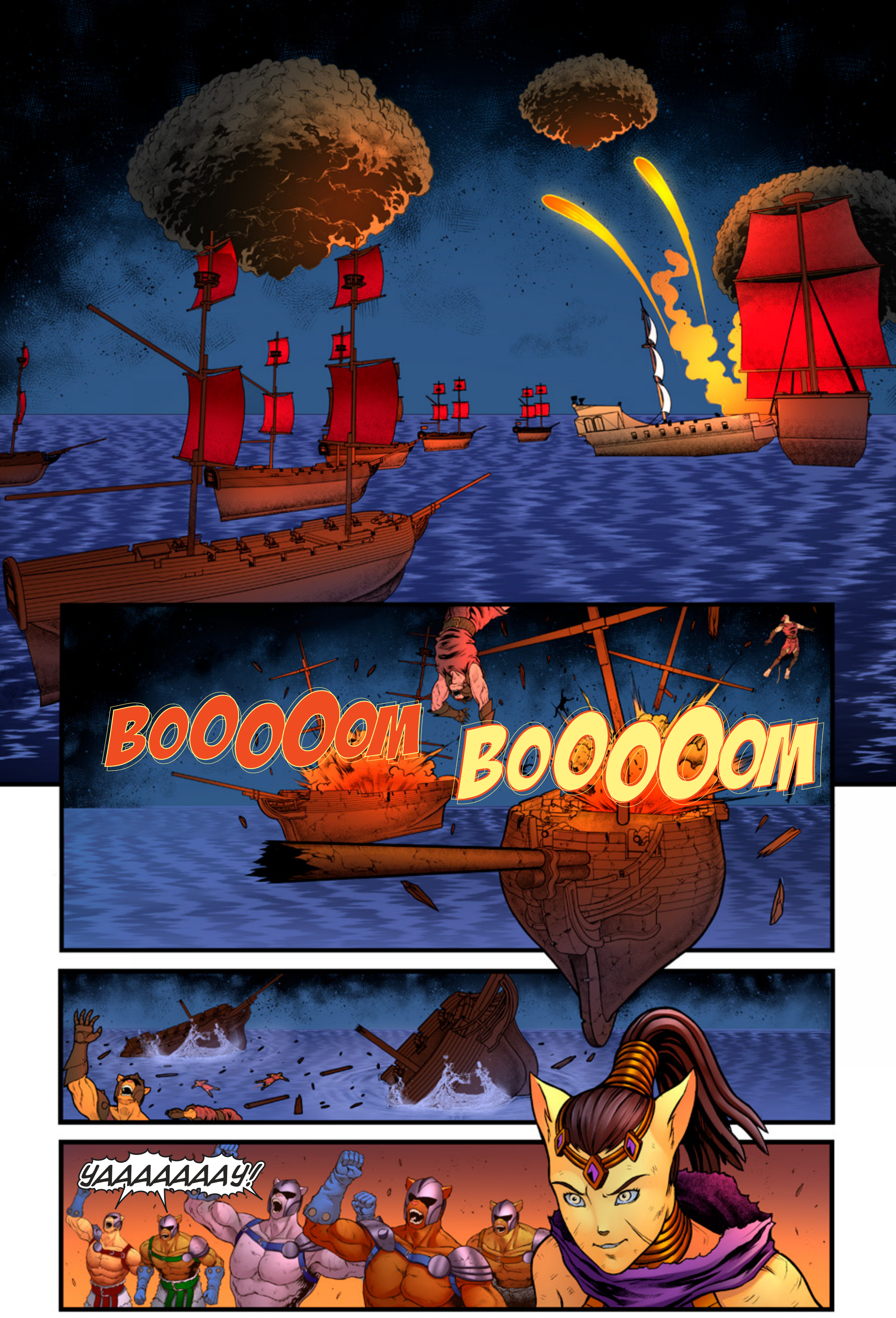

TOOM
THERE YOU ARE.
SWOOSH
ACK--
OOOF!
FOR THE KING!
KING ERAMAD, THAT IS.

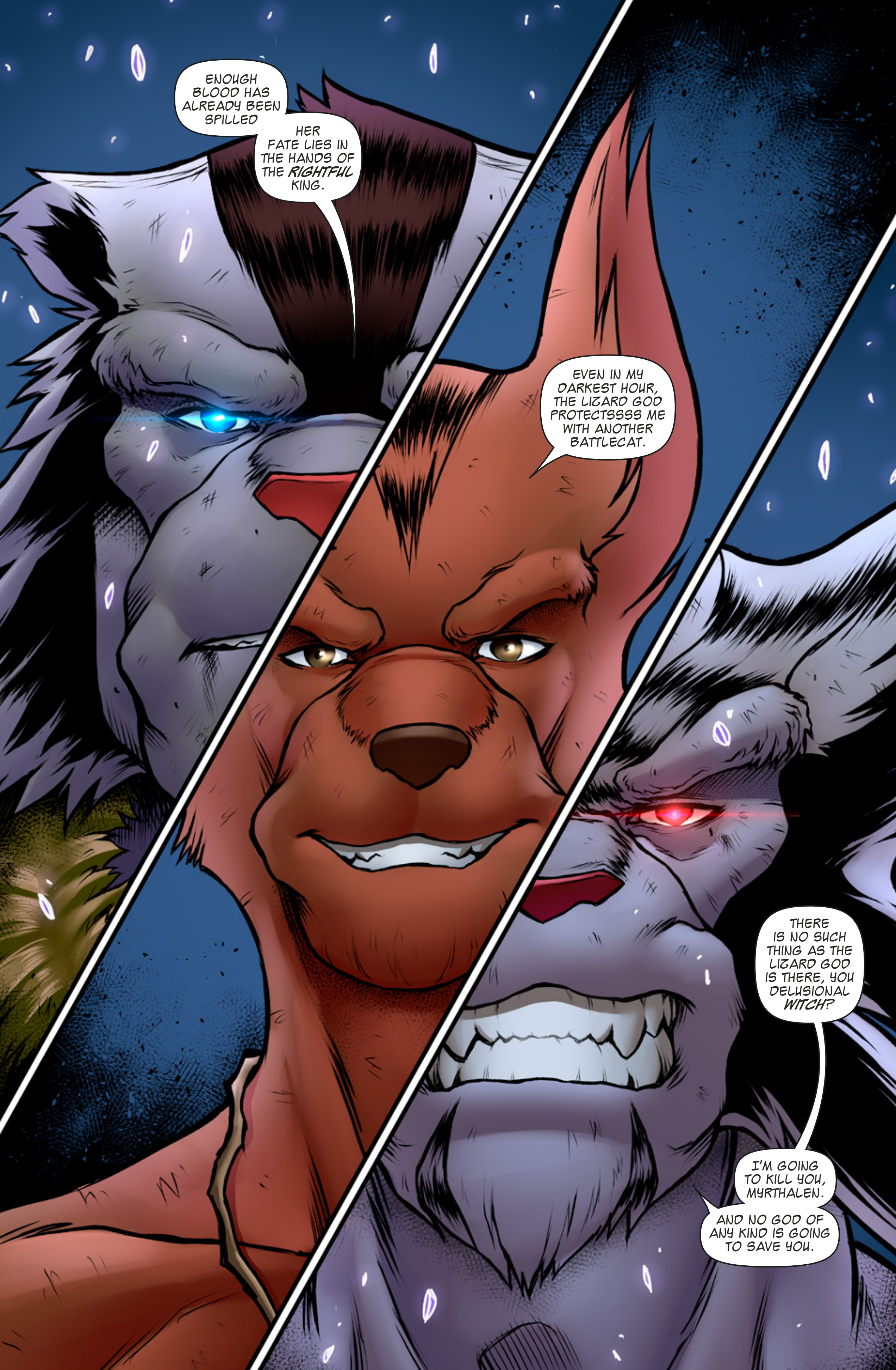

PITIFUL PUPPETS...
FIGHTING FOR A LOST CAUSE.
DON'T WORRY THOUGH.
I WILL MAKE SURE YOUR DEATHS ARE BOTH...
...SLOW...
...*AND* PAINFUL.
NO, JARNOCH...
...THIS IS YOUR END.
IMPOSSIBLE!

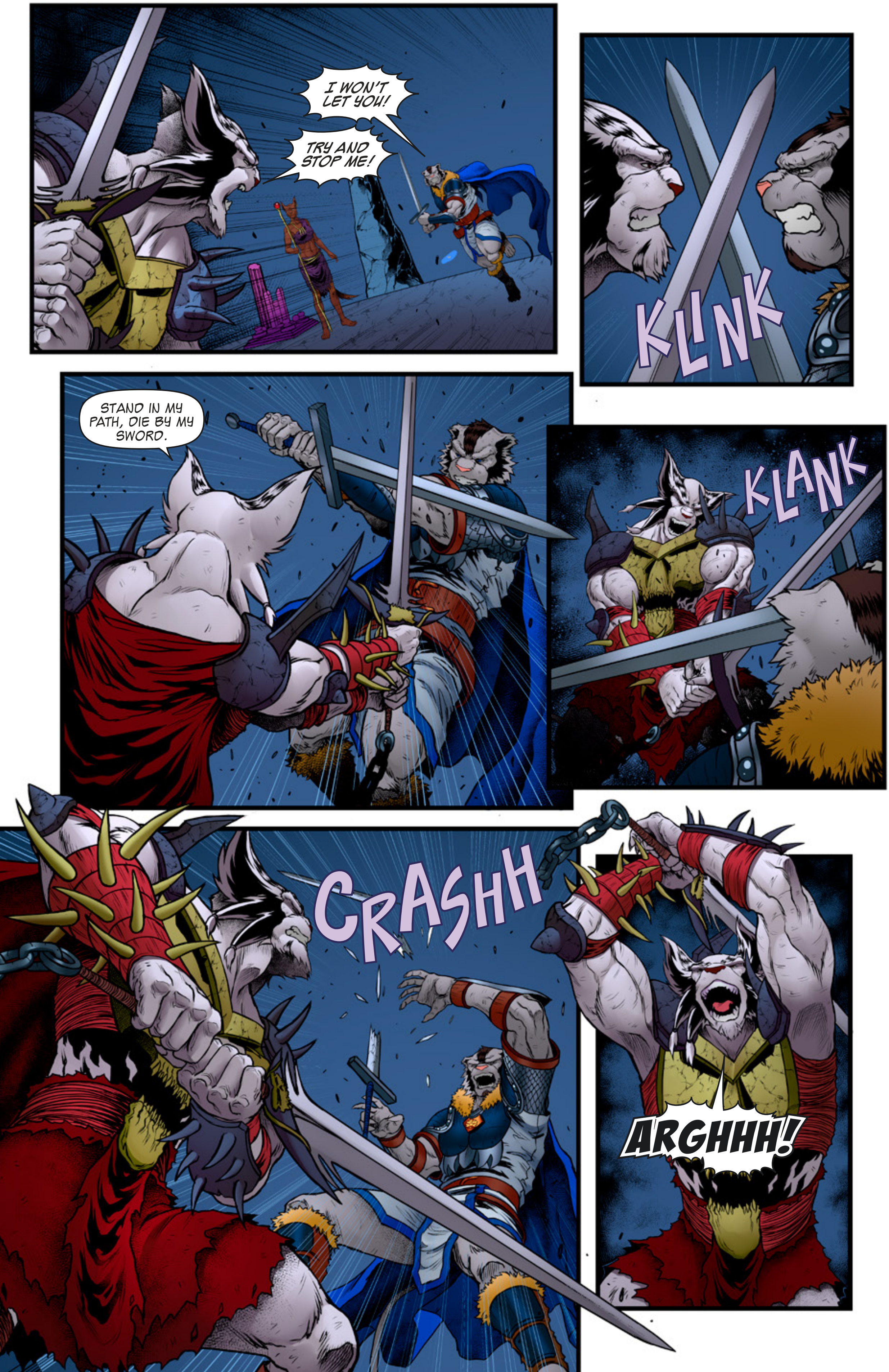

SHADOW!
ARRRGH!
HOW ARE YOU DOING THIS?
NECROMANCY MAY BE POWERFUL...
...BUT IT WILL NEVER SURPASS THE POWER OF THE LIGHT.

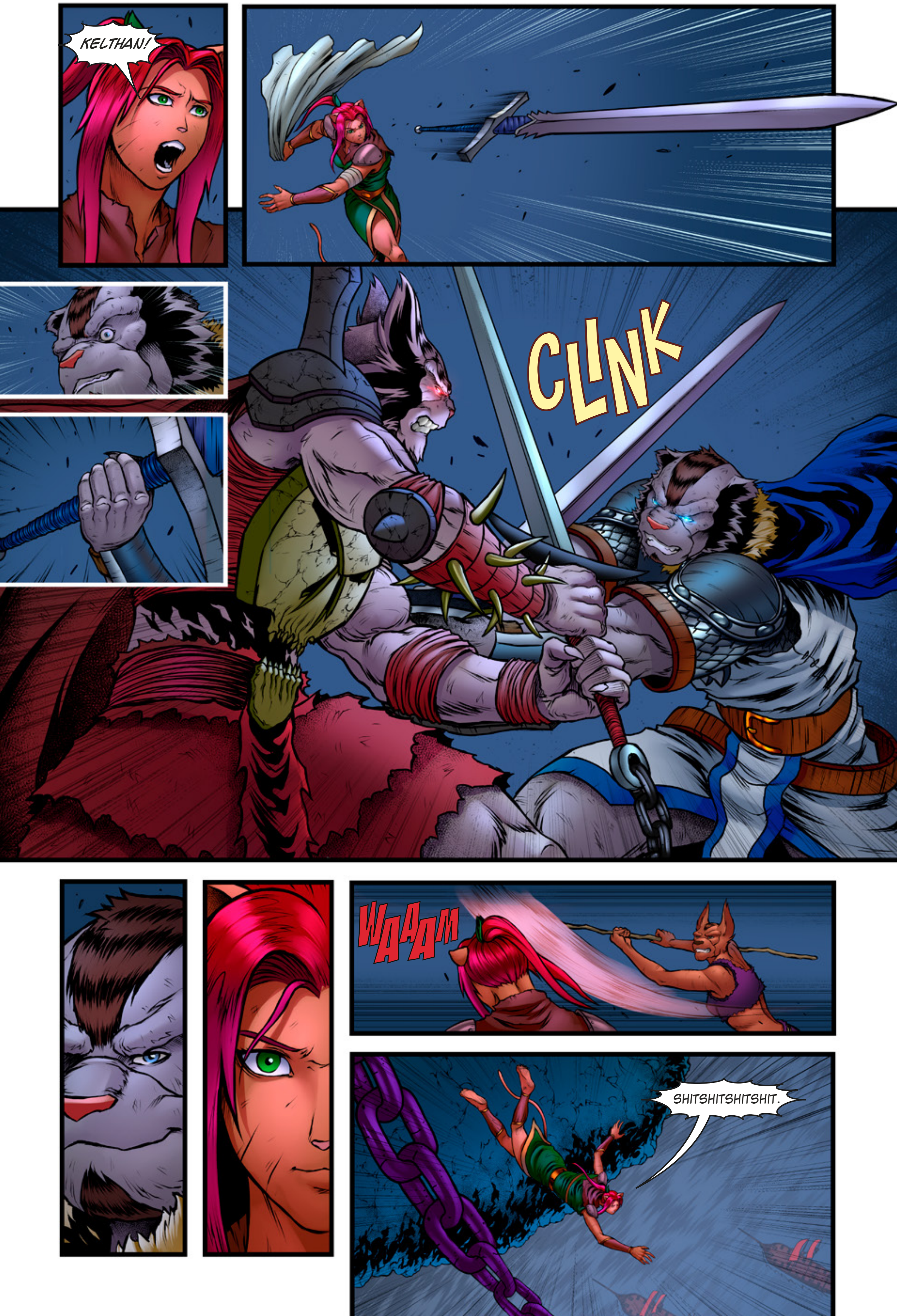

WHAT A WASTE.

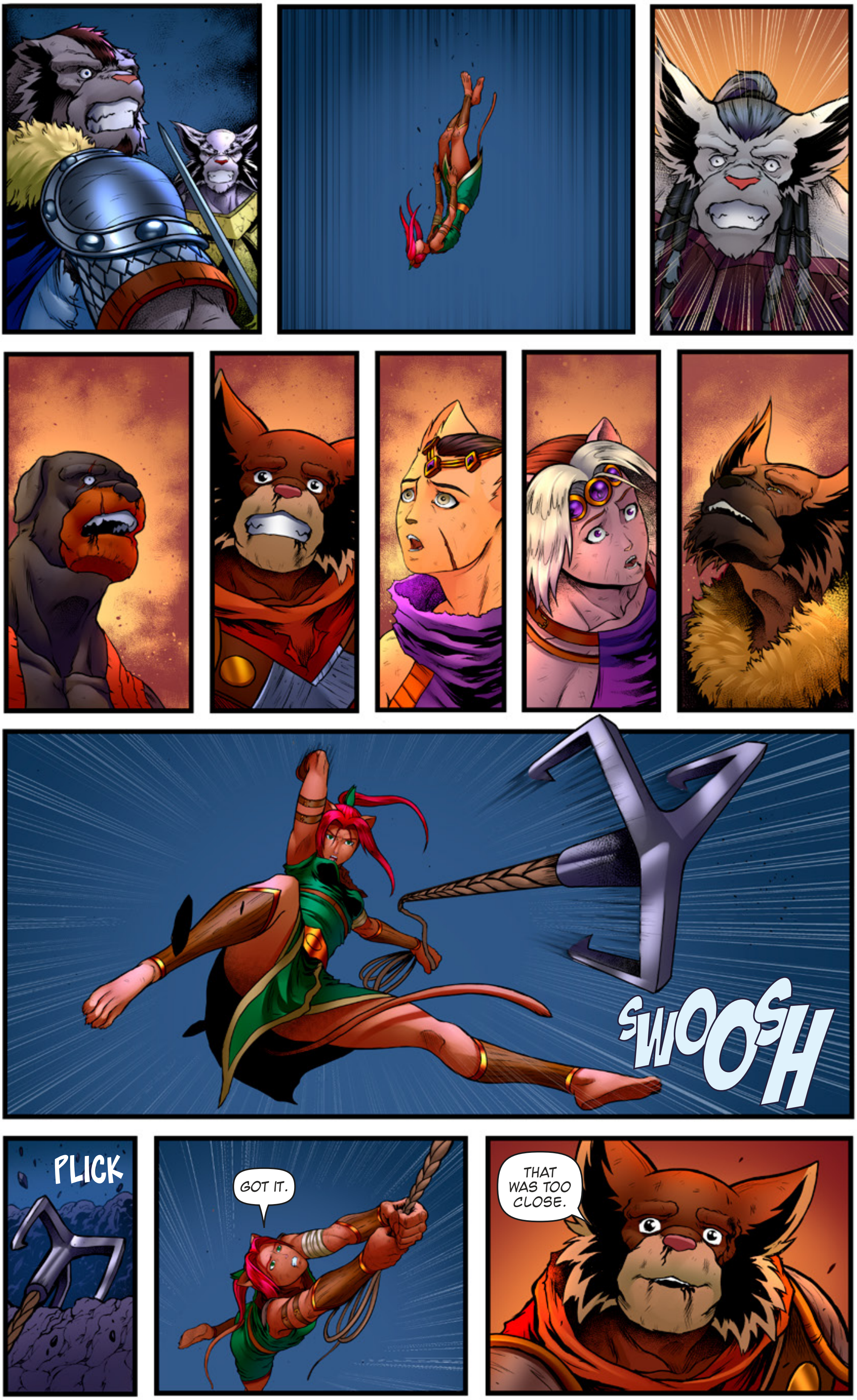

ARE THE BOULDERS, READY?
ALMOST, MY QUEEN.
ON MY COMMAND.
THREE...
...TWO...
...ONE.

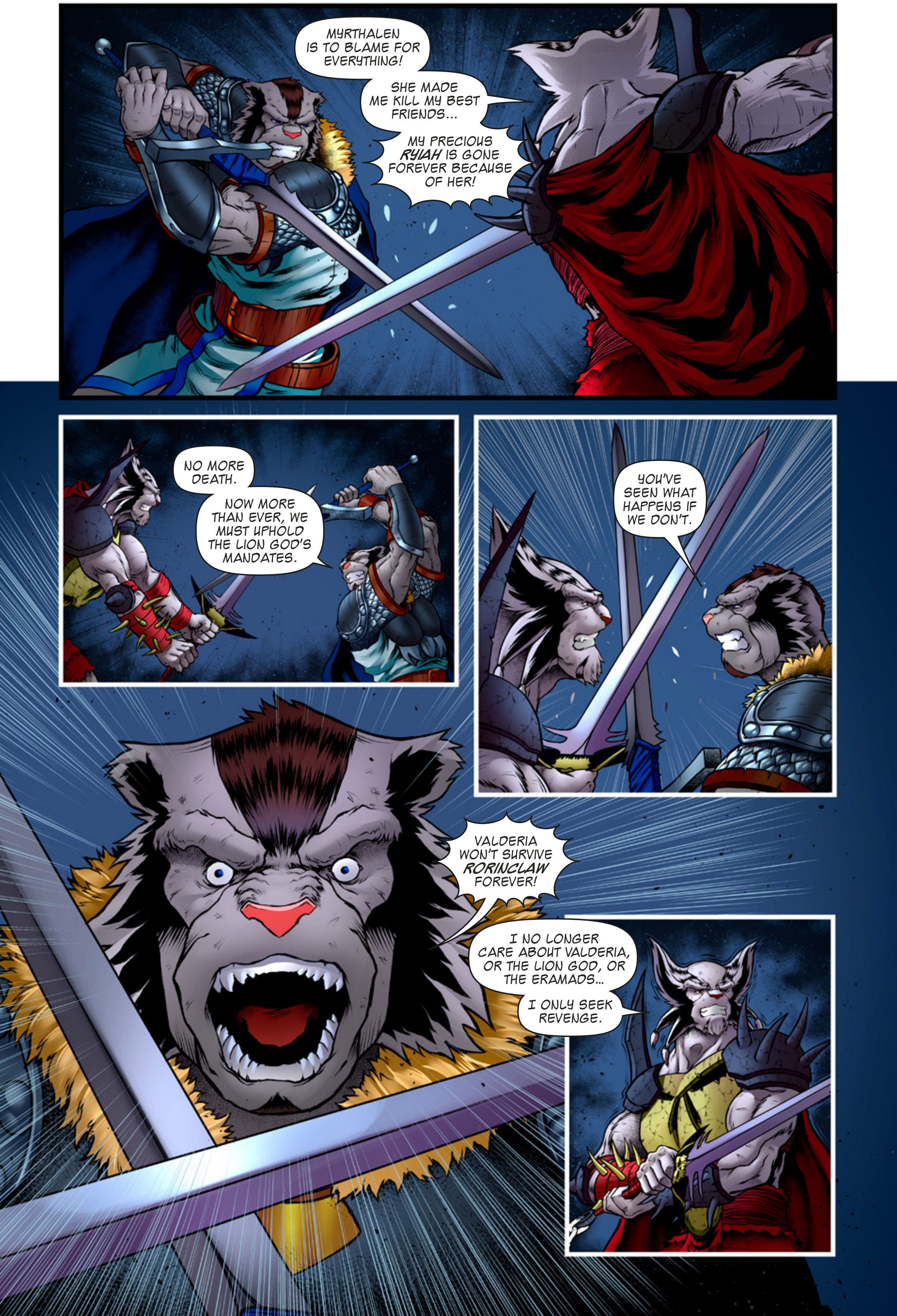

BOOOOOM
BOOOOOM
YAAAAAAAY!

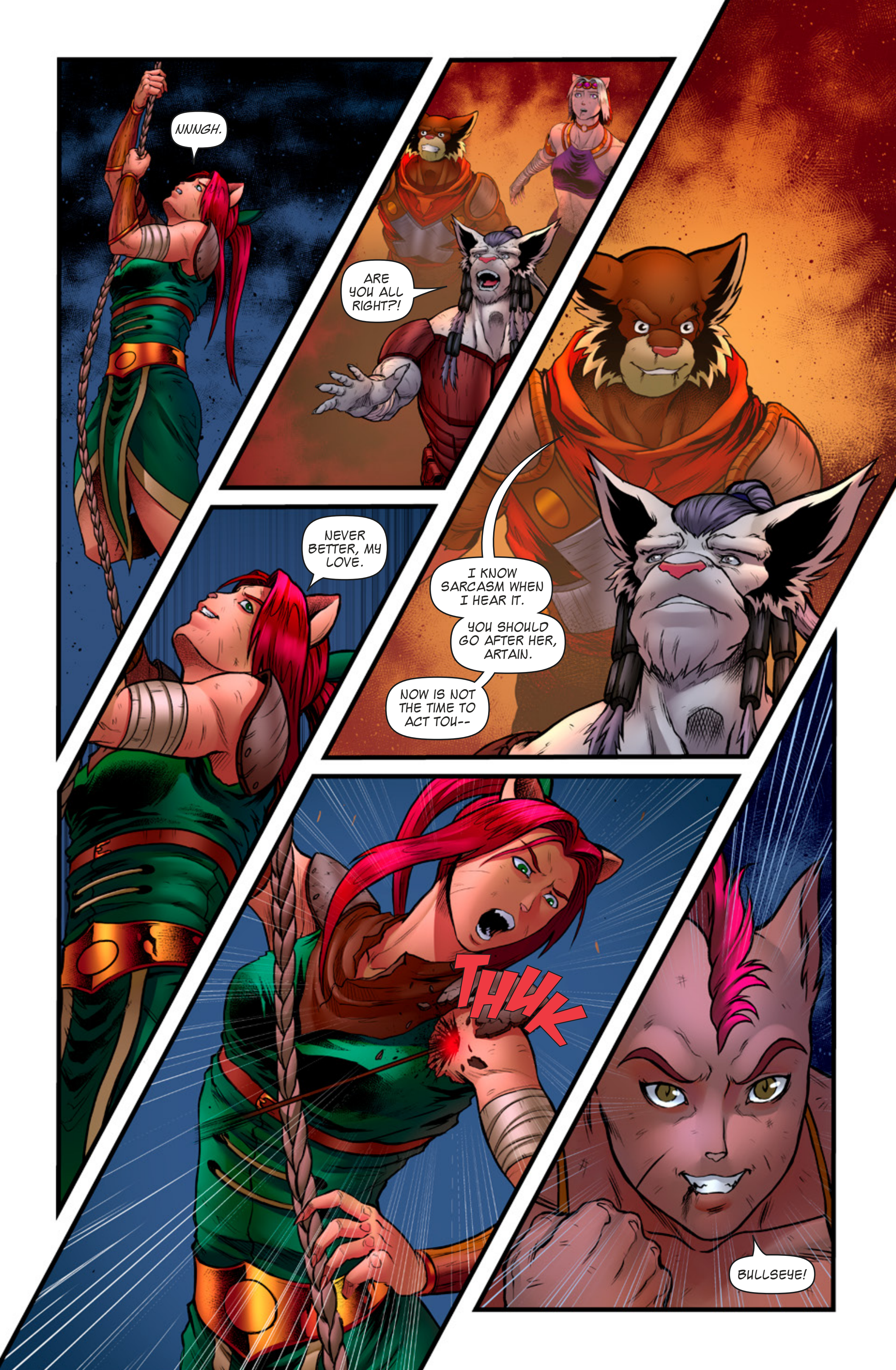

ENOUGH BLOOD HAS ALREADY BEEN SPILLED
HER FATE LIES IN THE HANDS OF THE *RIGHTFUL* KING.
EVEN IN MY DARKEST HOUR, THE LIZARD GOD PROTECTSSSS ME WITH ANOTHER BATTLECAT.
THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS THE LIZARD GOD IS THERE, YOU DELUSIONAL *WITCH*?
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, MYRTHALEN.
AND NO GOD OF ANY KIND IS GOING TO SAVE YOU.

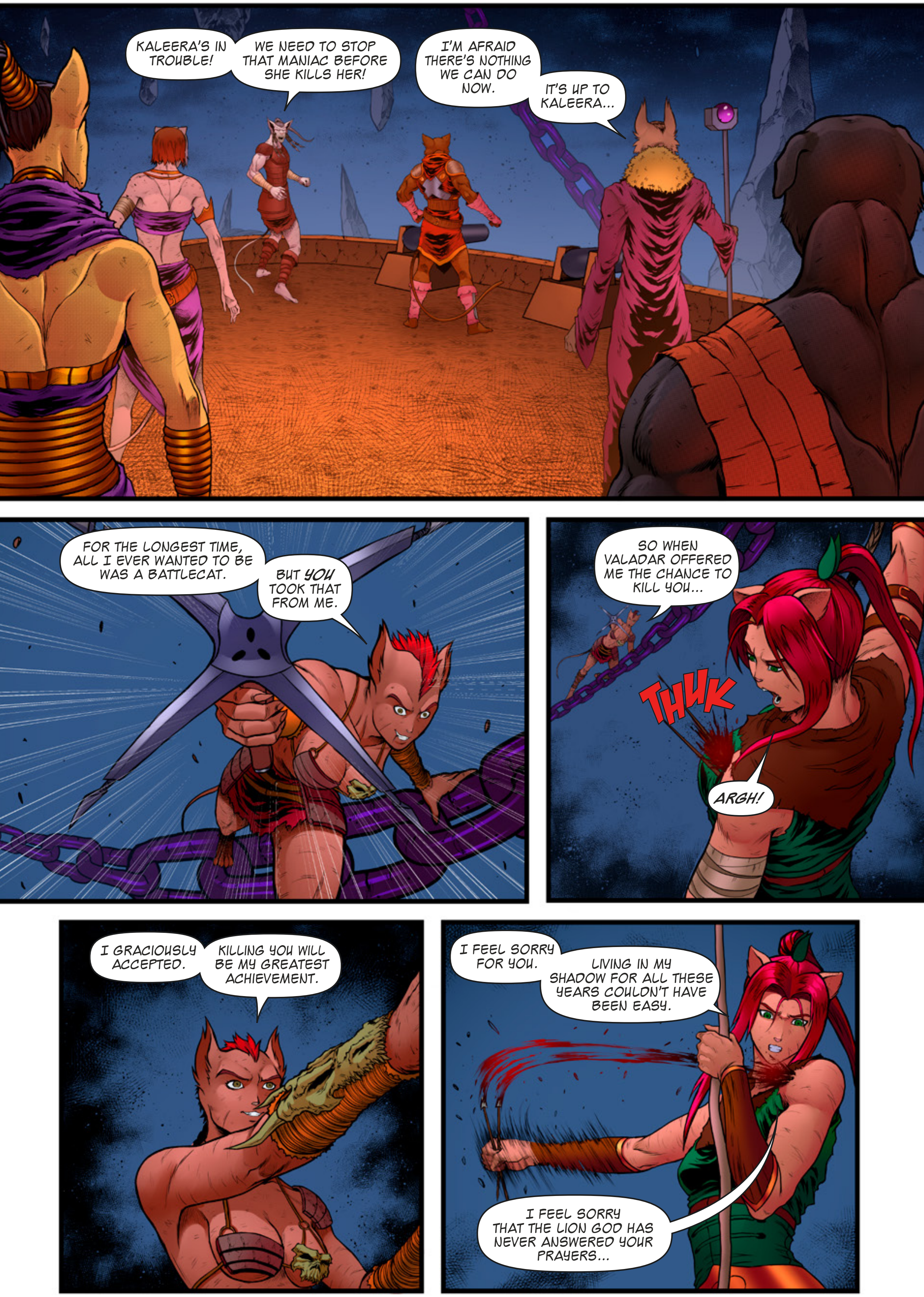

I WON'T LET YOU!
TRY AND STOP ME!
KLINK
STAND IN MY PATH, DIE BY MY SWORD.
KLANK
CRASHH
ARGHHH!

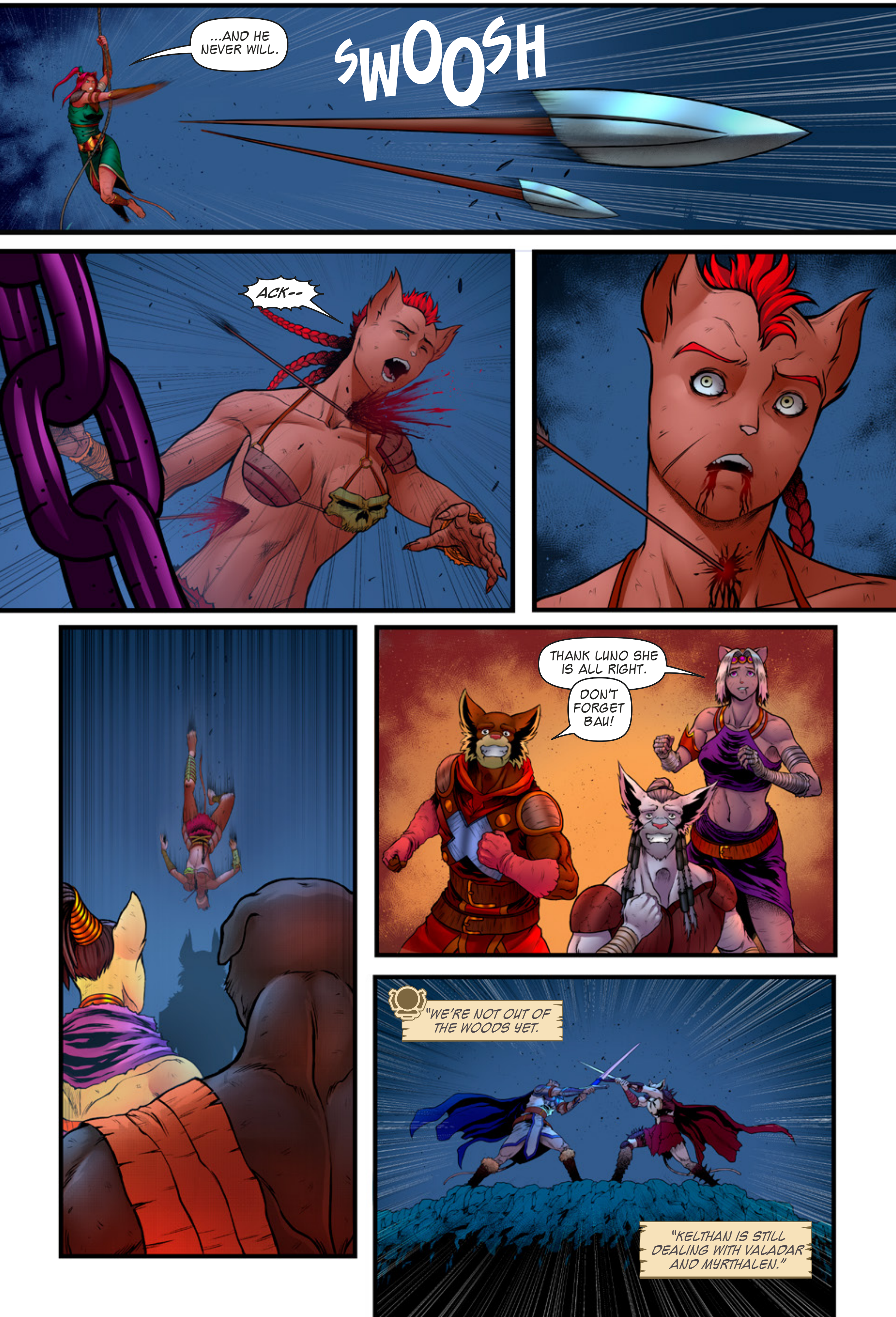

KELTHAN!
CLINK
WAAAM
SHITSHITSHITSHIT.

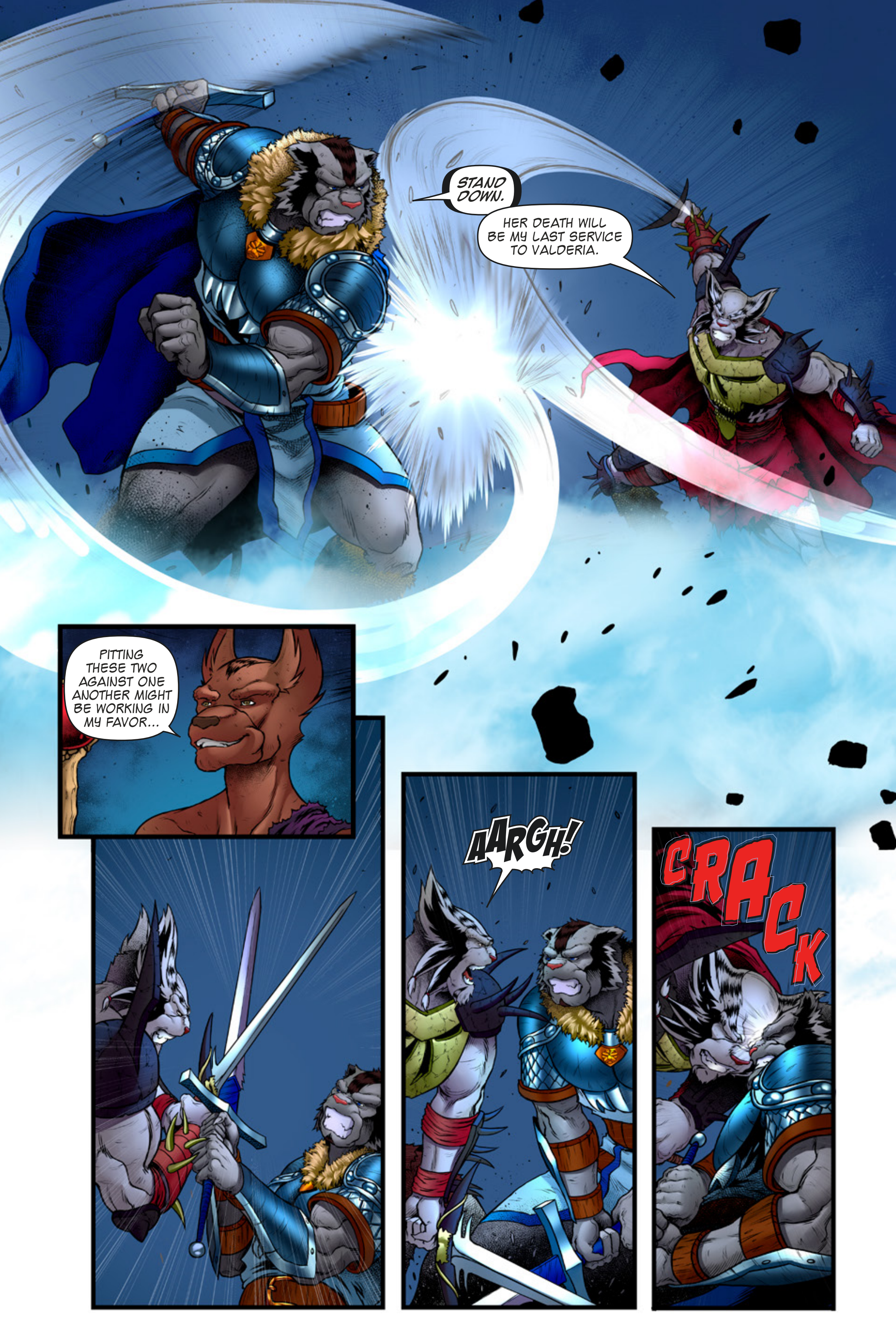

SWOOSH
PLICK
GOT IT.
THAT WAS TOO CLOSE.

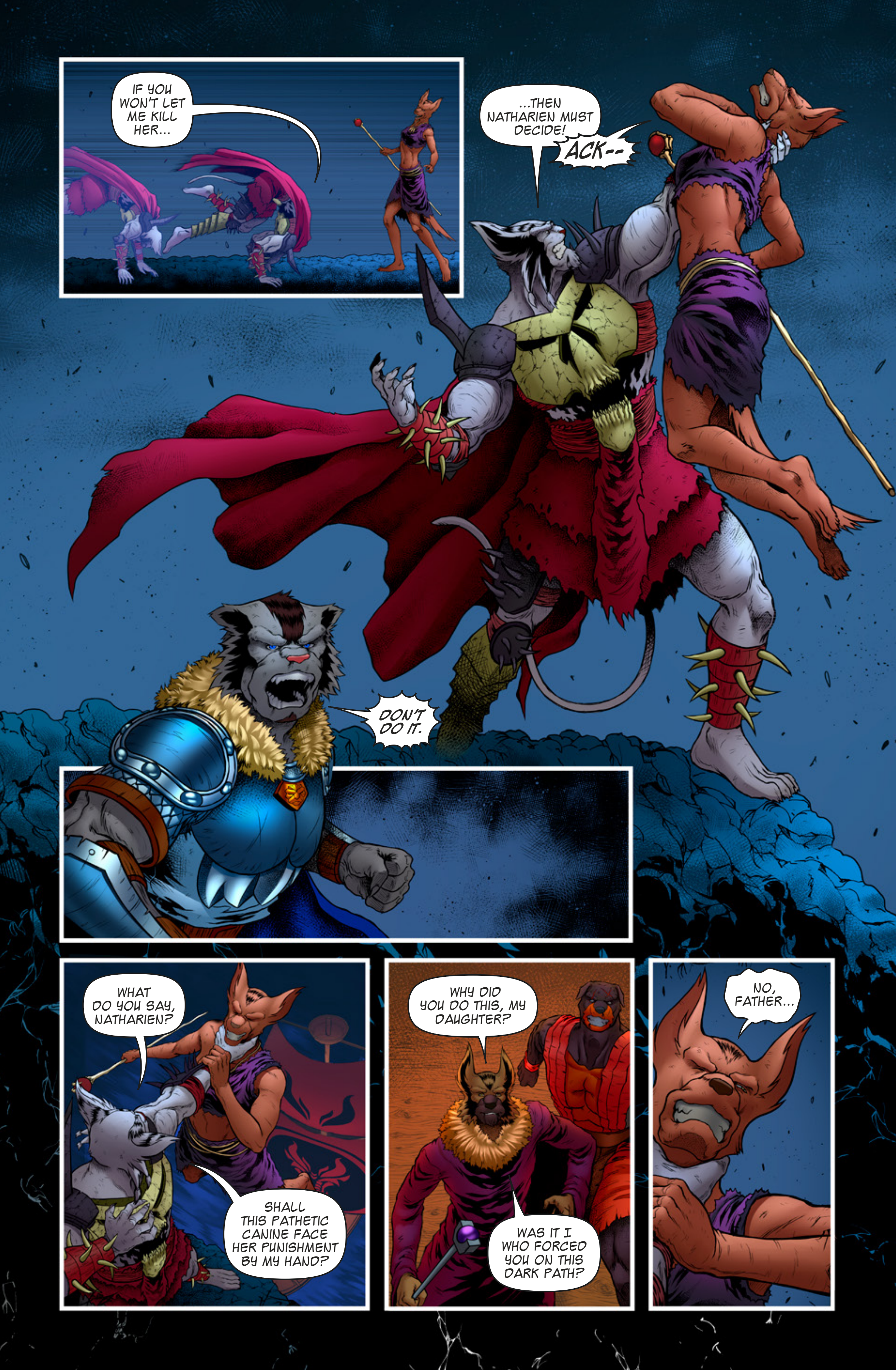

MYRTHALEN IS TO BLAME FOR EVERYTHING!
SHE MADE ME KILL MY BEST FRIENDS...
MY PRECIOUS *RYIAH* IS GONE FOREVER BECAUSE OF HER!
NO MORE DEATH.
NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE MUST UPHOLD THE LION GOD'S MANDATES.
YOU'VE SEEN WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T.
VALDERIA WON'T SURVIVE *RORINCLAW* FOREVER!
I NO LONGER CARE ABOUT VALDERIA, OR THE LION GOD, OR THE ERAMADS...
I ONLY SEEK REVENGE.

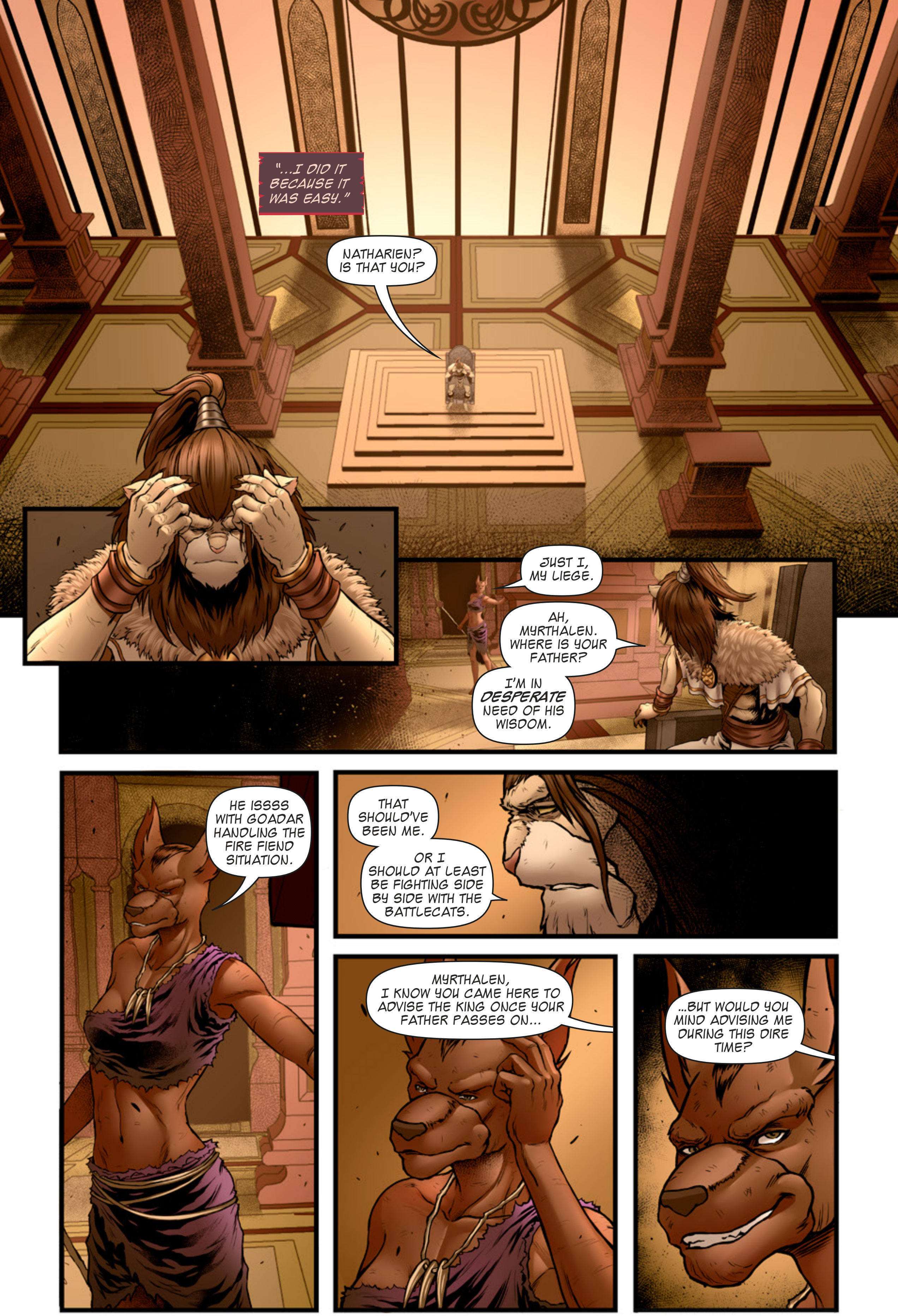

NNNGH.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
NEVER BETTER, MY LOVE.
I KNOW SARCASM WHEN I HEAR IT.
YOU SHOULD GO AFTER HER, ARTAIN.
NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO ACT TOU--
THUK
BULLSEYE!

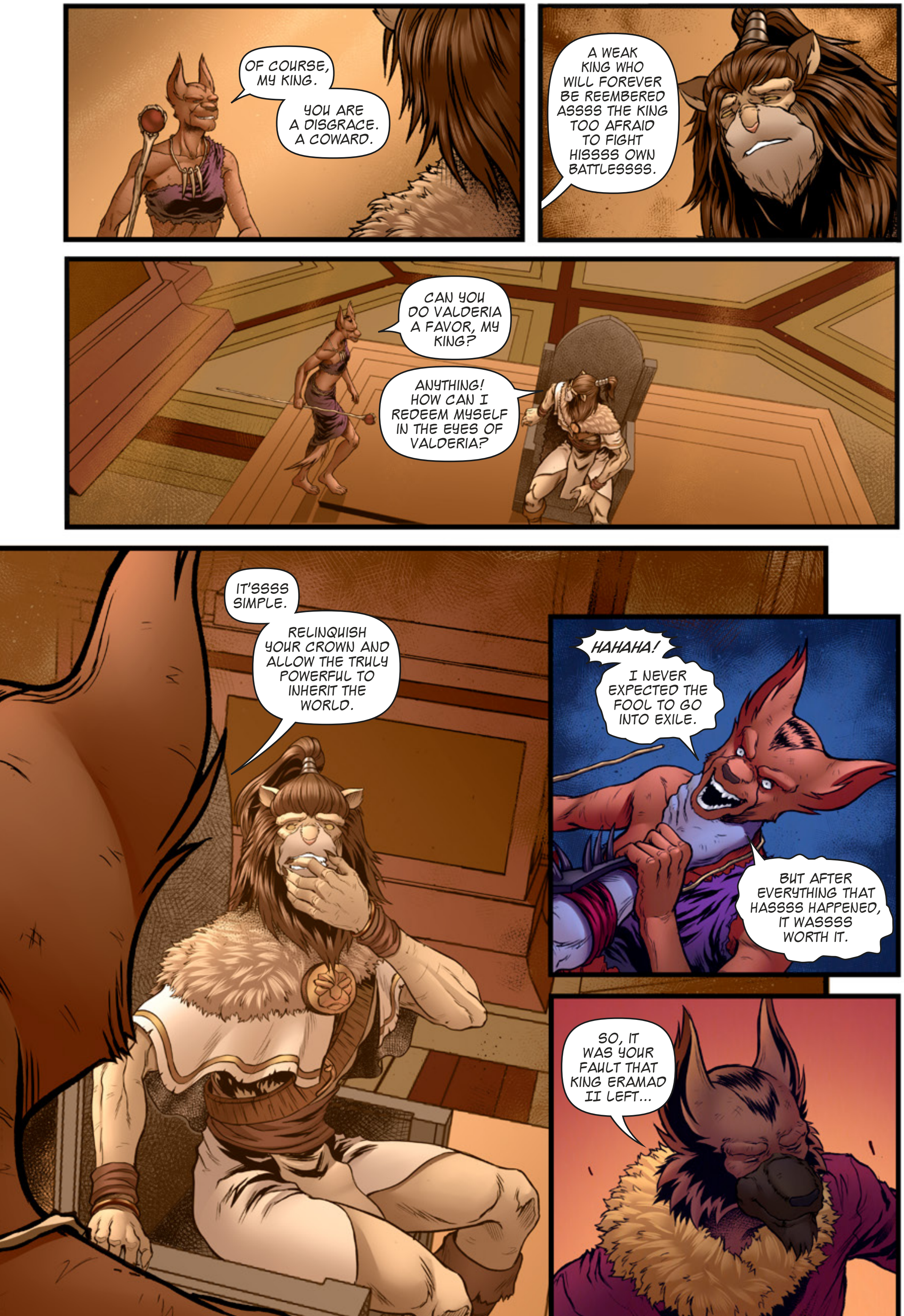

KALEERA'S IN TROUBLE!
WE NEED TO STOP THAT MANIAC BEFORE SHE KILLS HER!
I'M AFRAID THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO NOW.
IT'S UP TO KALEERA...
FOR THE LONGEST TIME, ALL I EVER WANTED TO BE WAS A BATTLECAT.
BUT *YOU* TOOK THAT FROM ME.
SO WHEN VALADAR OFFERED ME THE CHANCE TO KILL YOU...
THUK
ARGH!
I GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED.
KILLING YOU WILL BE MY GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT.
I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU.
LIVING IN MY SHADOW FOR ALL THESE YEARS COULDN'T HAVE BEEN EASY.
I FEEL SORRY THAT THE LION GOD HAS NEVER ANSWERED YOUR PRAYERS...

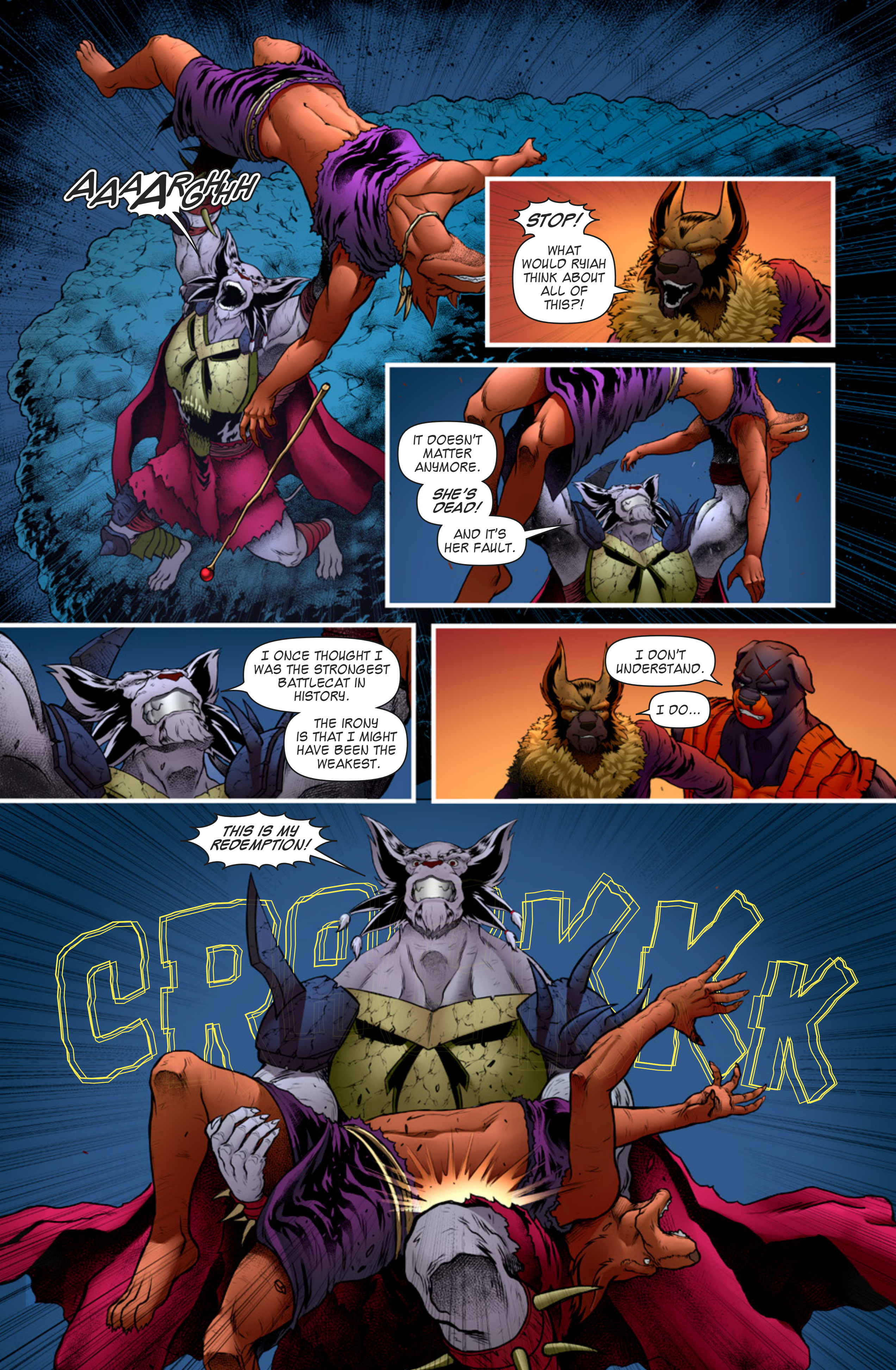

...AND HE NEVER WILL.
SWOOSH
ACK--
THANK LUNO SHE IS ALL RIGHT.
DON'T FORGET BAU!
"WE'RE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET.
"KELTHAN IS STILL DEALING WITH VALADAR AND MYRTHALEN."

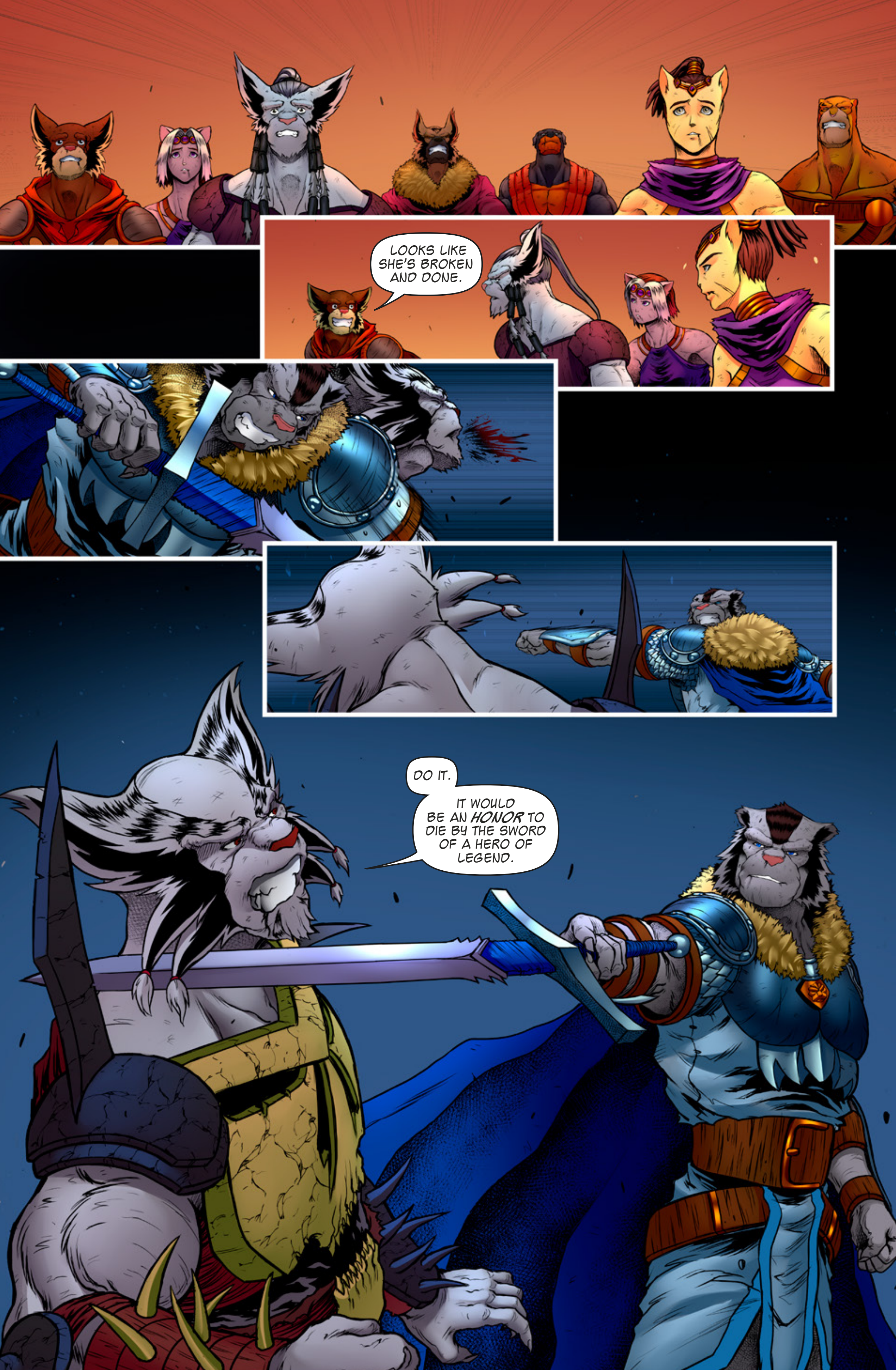

STAND DOWN.
HER DEATH WILL BE MY LAST SERVICE TO VALDERIA.
PITTING THESE TWO AGAINST ONE ANOTHER MIGHT BE WORKING IN MY FAVOR...
AARGH!
CRACK

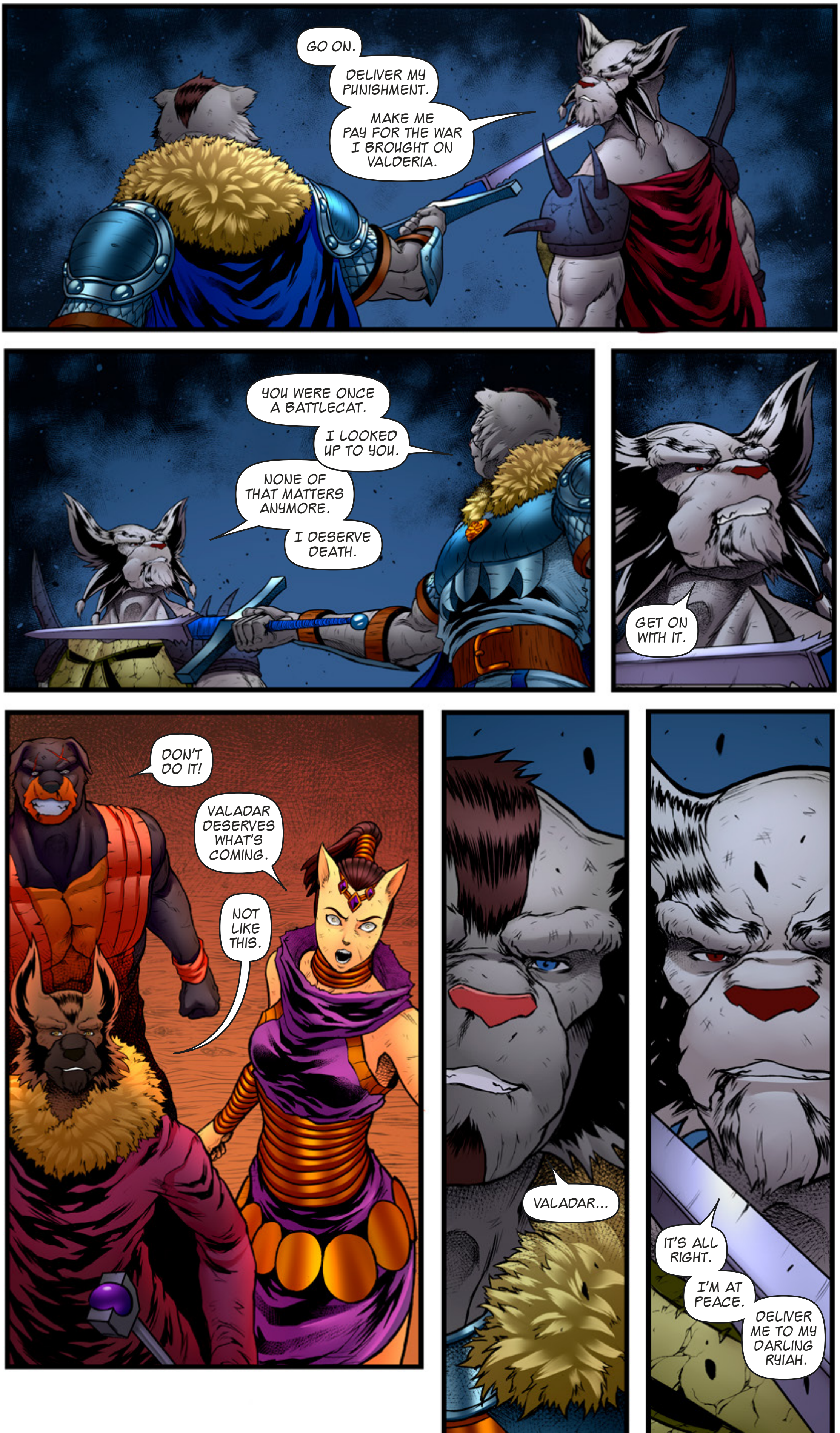

IF YOU WON'T LET ME KILL HER...
...THEN NATHARIEN MUST DECIDE!
ACK--
DON'T DO IT.
WHAT DO YOU SAY, NATHARIEN?
SHALL THIS PATHETIC CANINE FACE HER PUNISHMENT BY MY HAND?
WHY DID YOU DO THIS, MY DAUGHTER?
WAS IT I WHO FORCED YOU ON THIS DARK PATH?
NO, FATHER...

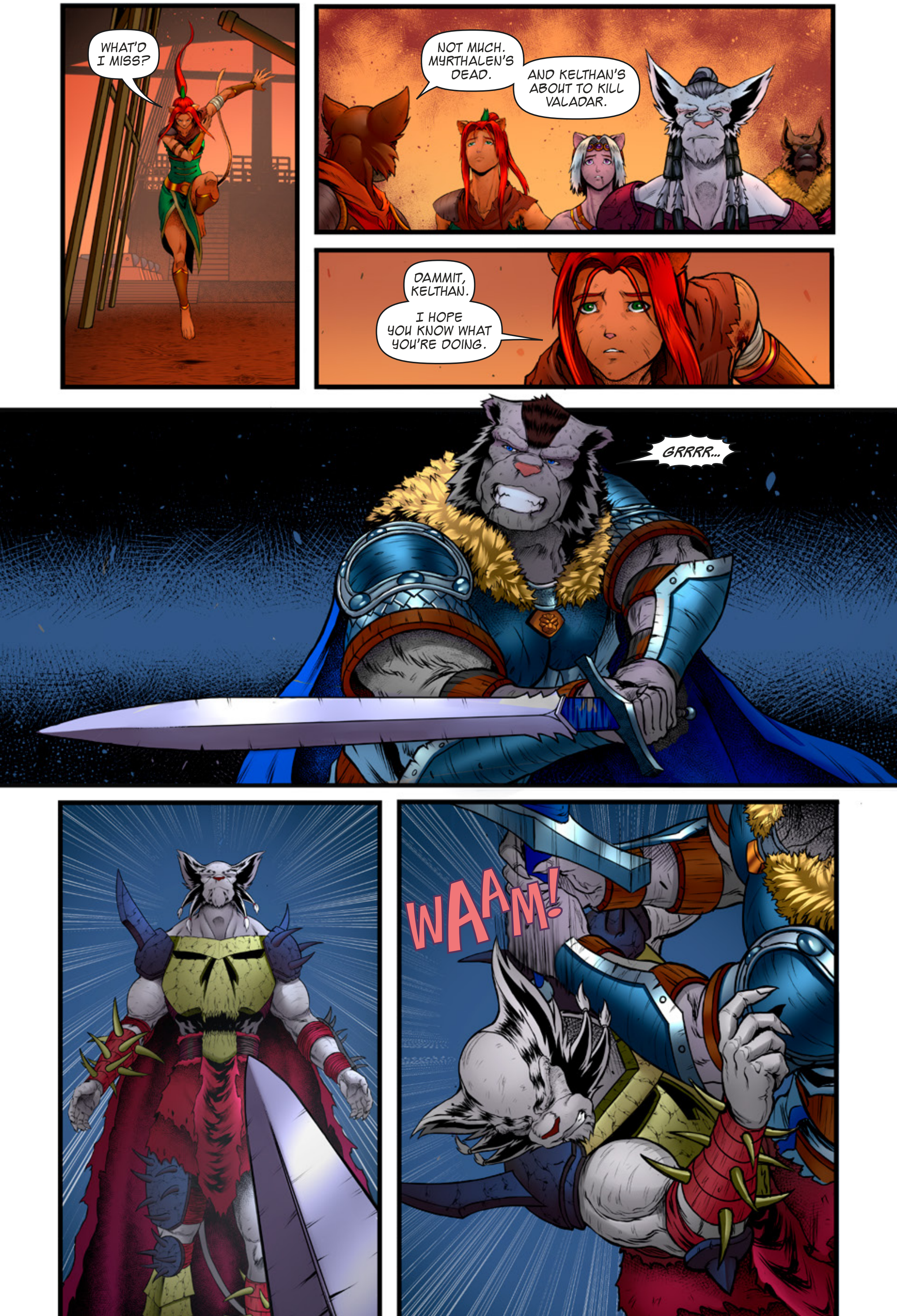

"...I DID IT BECAUSE IT WAS EASY."
NATHARIEN? IS THAT YOU?
JUST I, MY LIEGE.
AH, MYRTHALEN. WHERE IS YOUR FATHER?
I'M IN *DESPERATE* NEED OF HIS WISDOM.
HE ISSSS WITH GOADAR HANDLING THE FIRE FIEND SITUATION.
THAT SHOULD'VE BEEN ME.
OR I SHOULD AT LEAST BE FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE BATTLECATS.
MYRTHALEN, I KNOW YOU CAME HERE TO ADVISE THE KING ONCE YOUR FATHER PASSES ON...
...BUT WOULD YOU MIND ADVISING ME DURING THIS DIRE TIME?

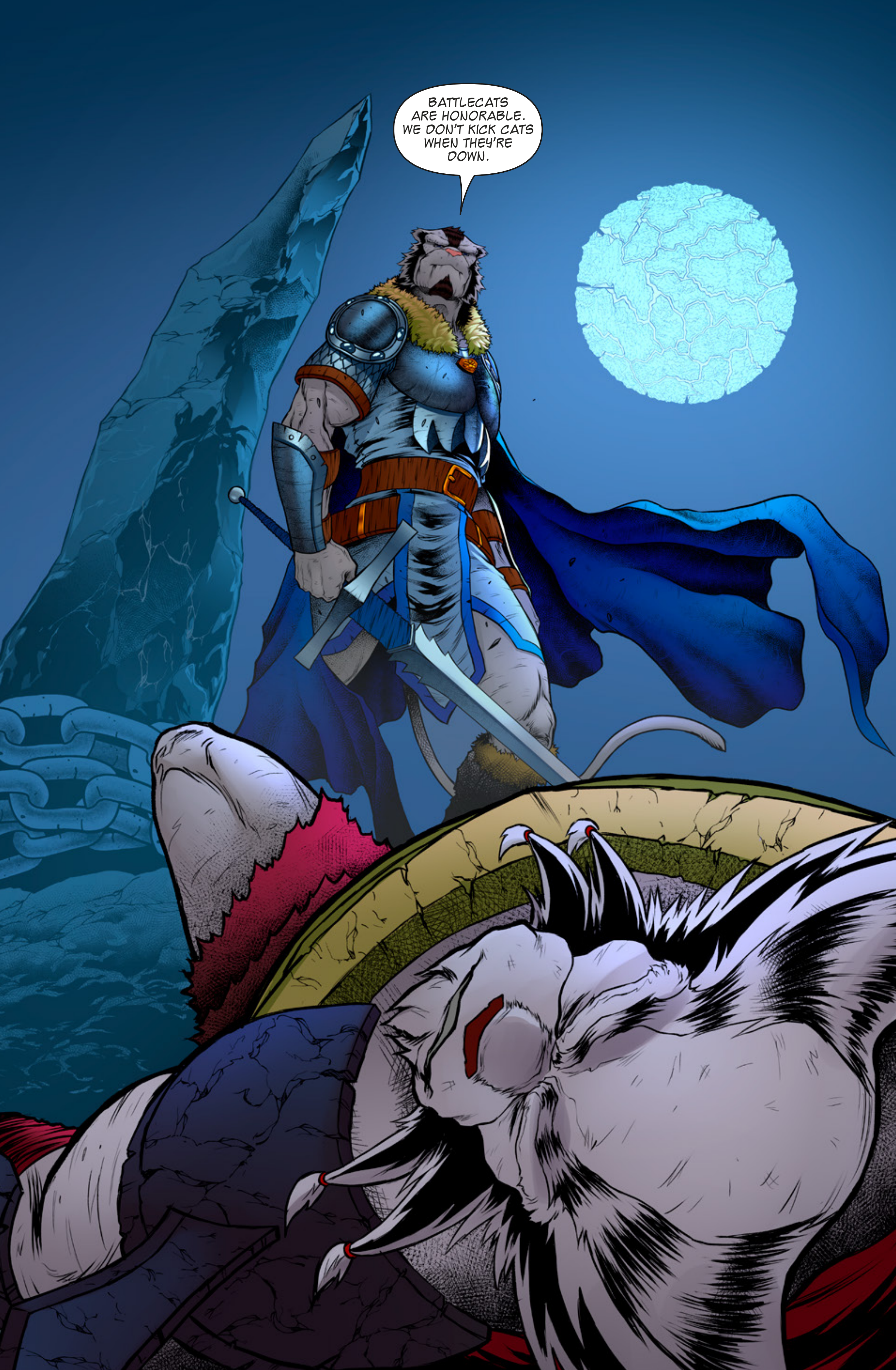

OF COURSE, MY KING.
YOU ARE A DISGRACE. A COWARD.
A WEAK KING WHO WILL FOREVER BE REEMBERED ASSSS THE KING TOO AFRAID TO FIGHT HISSSS OWN BATTLESSSS.
CAN YOU DO VALDERIA A FAVOR, MY KING?
ANYTHING! HOW CAN I REDEEM MYSELF IN THE EYES OF VALDERIA?
IT'SSSS SIMPLE.
RELINQUISH YOUR CROWN AND ALLOW THE TRULY POWERFUL TO INHERIT THE WORLD.
HAHAHA!
I NEVER EXPECTED THE FOOL TO GO INTO EXILE.
BUT AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HASSSS HAPPENED, IT WASSSS WORTH IT.
SO, IT WAS YOUR FAULT THAT KING ERAMAD II LEFT...

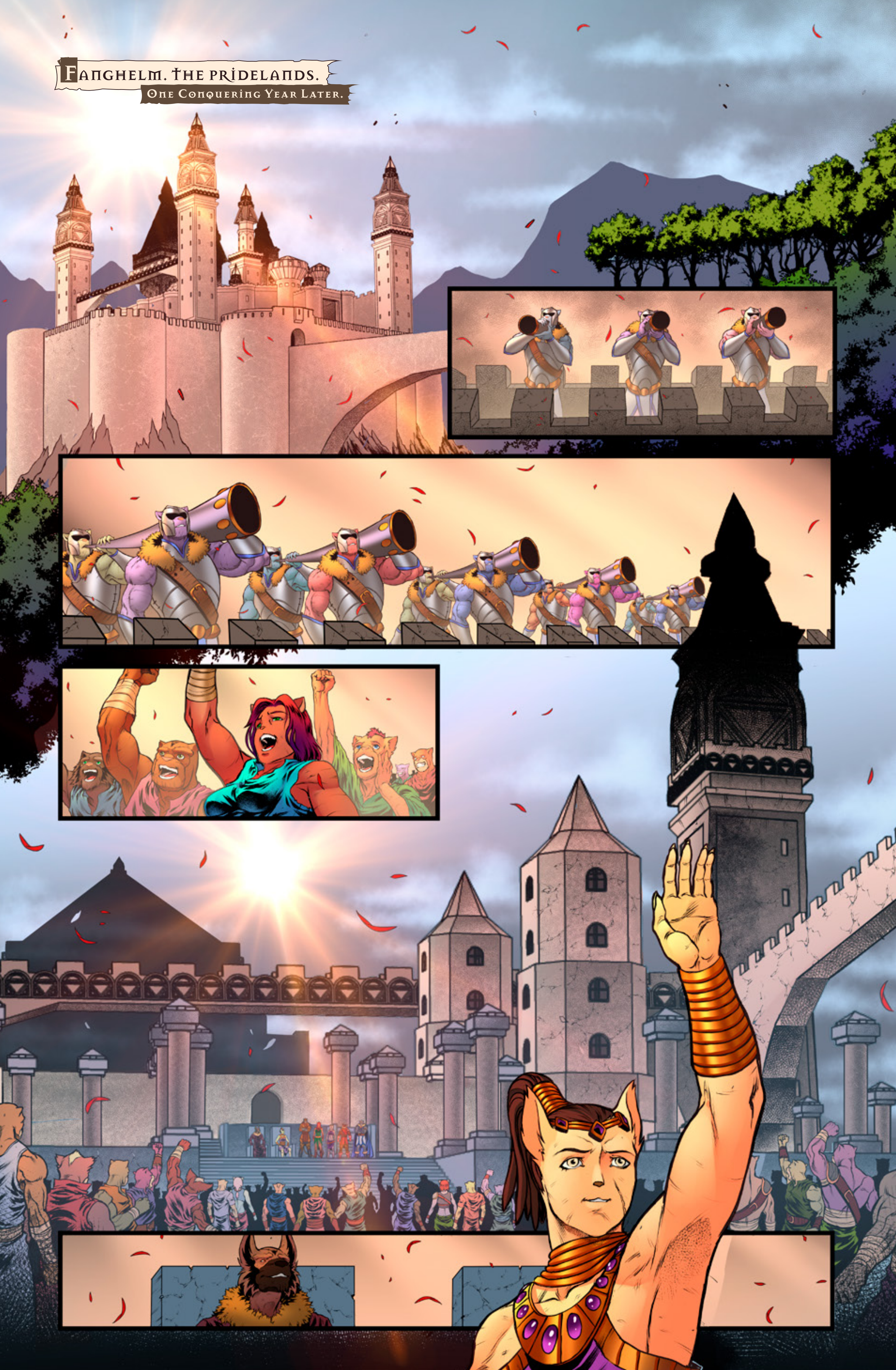

AAAARGHHH
STOP!
WHAT WOULD RYIAH THINK ABOUT ALL OF THIS?!
IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE.
SHE'S DEAD!
AND IT'S HER FAULT.
I ONCE THOUGHT I WAS THE STRONGEST BATTLECAT IN HISTORY.
THE IRONY IS THAT I MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE WEAKEST.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I DO...
THIS IS MY REDEMPTION!

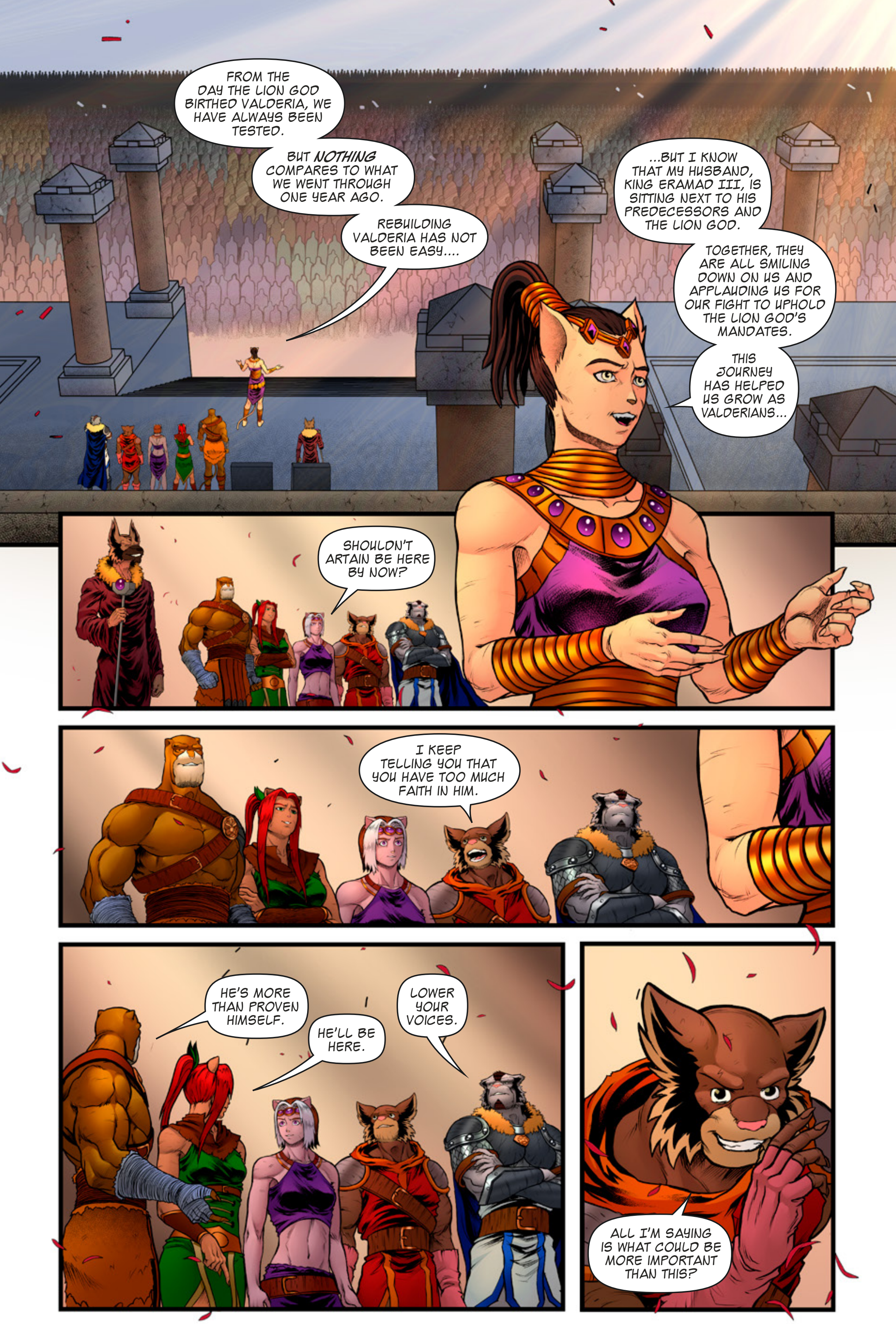

LOOKS LIKE SHE'S BROKEN AND DONE.
DO IT.
IT WOULD BE AN *HONOR* TO DIE BY THE SWORD OF A HERO OF LEGEND.

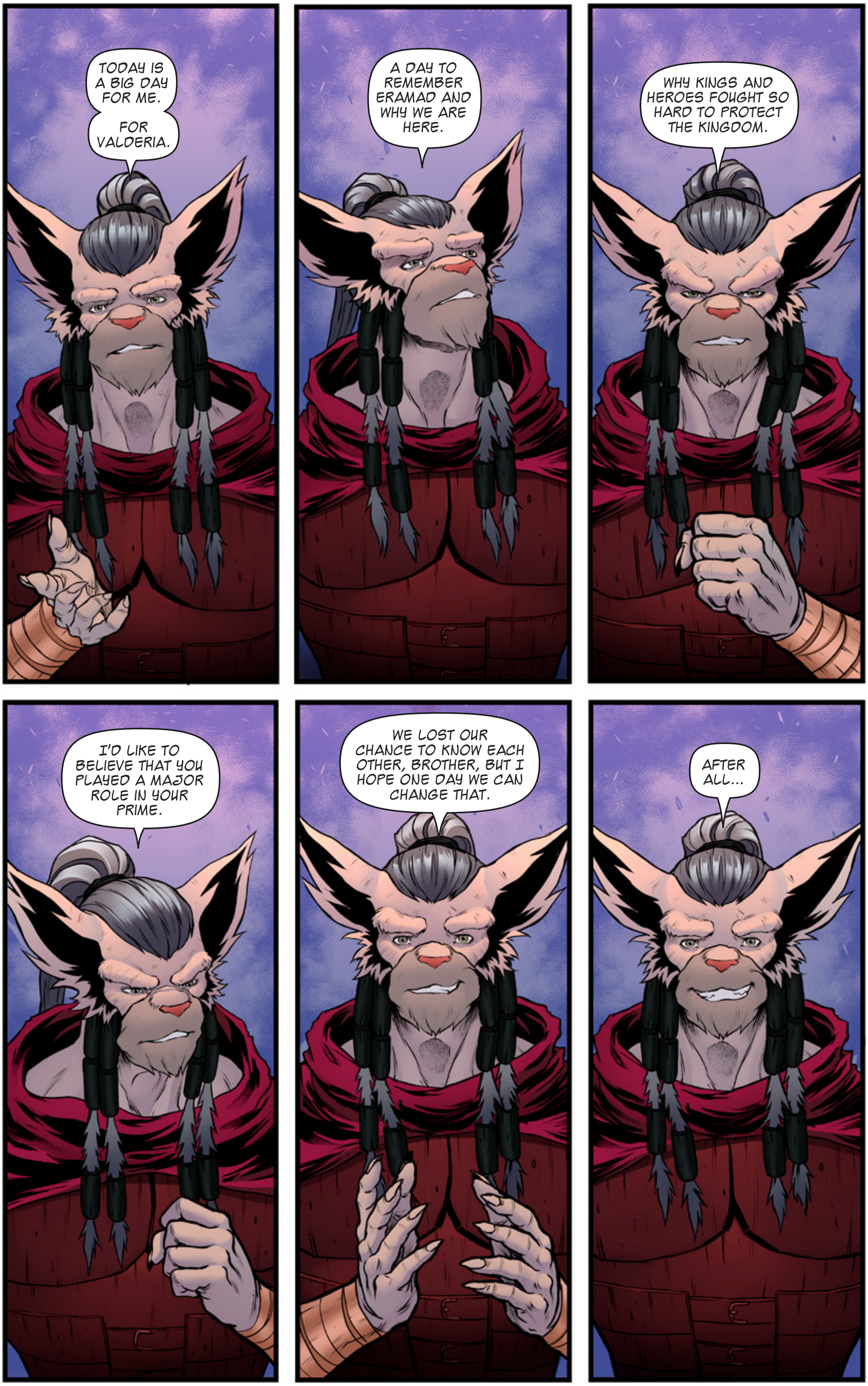

GO ON.
DELIVER MY PUNISHMENT.
MAKE ME PAY FOR THE WAR I BROUGHT ON VALDERIA.
YOU WERE ONCE A BATTLECAT.
I LOOKED UP TO YOU.
NONE OF THAT MATTERS ANYMORE.
I DESERVE DEATH.
GET ON WITH IT.
DON'T DO IT!
VALADAR DESERVES WHAT'S COMING.
NOT LIKE THIS.
VALADAR...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I'M AT PEACE.
DELIVER ME TO MY DARLING RYIAH.

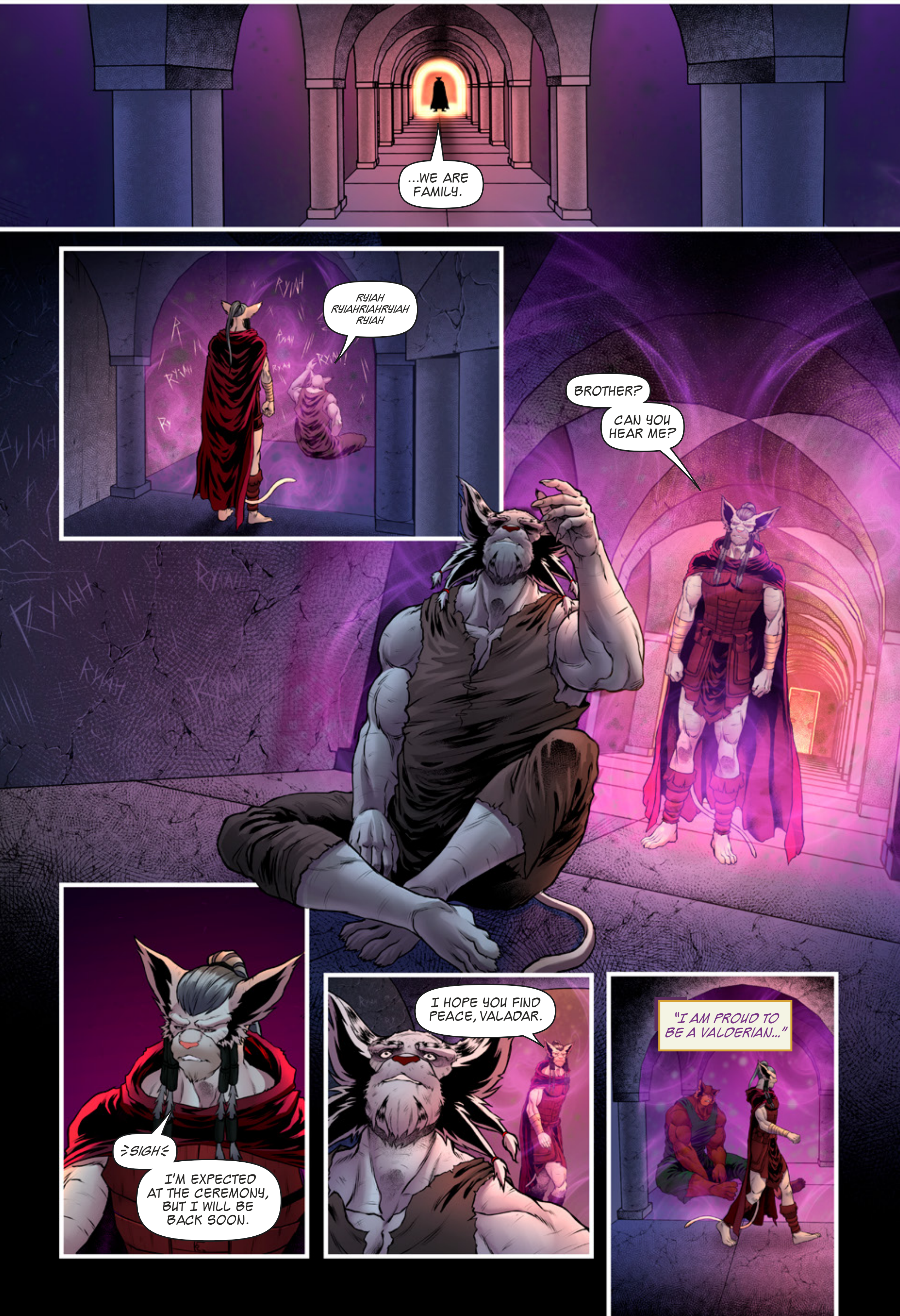

WHAT'D I MISS?
NOT MUCH. MYRTHALEN'S DEAD.
AND KELTHAN'S ABOUT TO KILL VALADAR.
DAMMIT, KELTHAN.
I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
GRRRR...
WAAM!

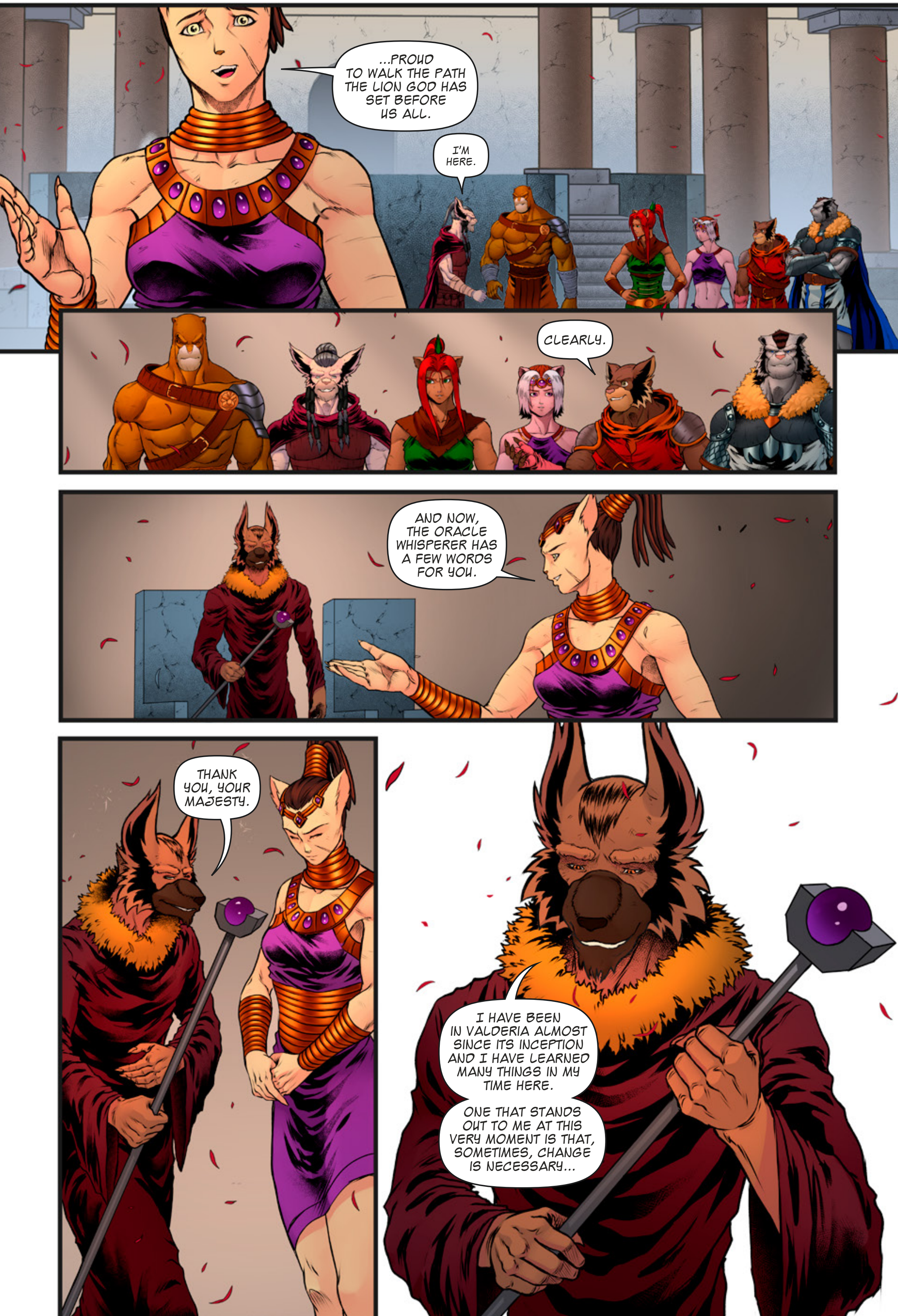

BATTLECATS ARE HONORABLE. WE DON'T KICK CATS WHEN THEY'RE DOWN.

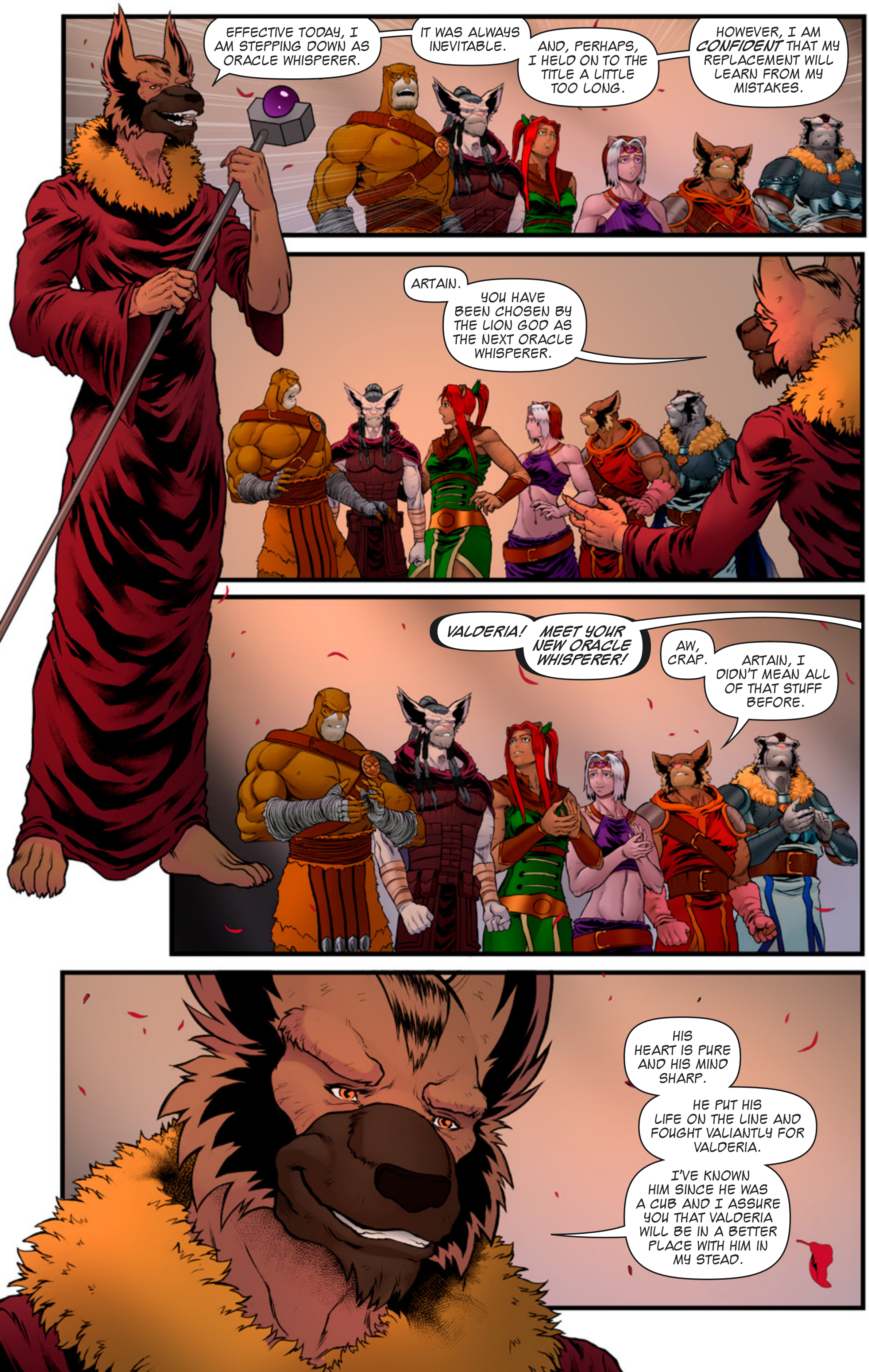

Fanghelm. The Pridelands.
One Conquering Year Later.

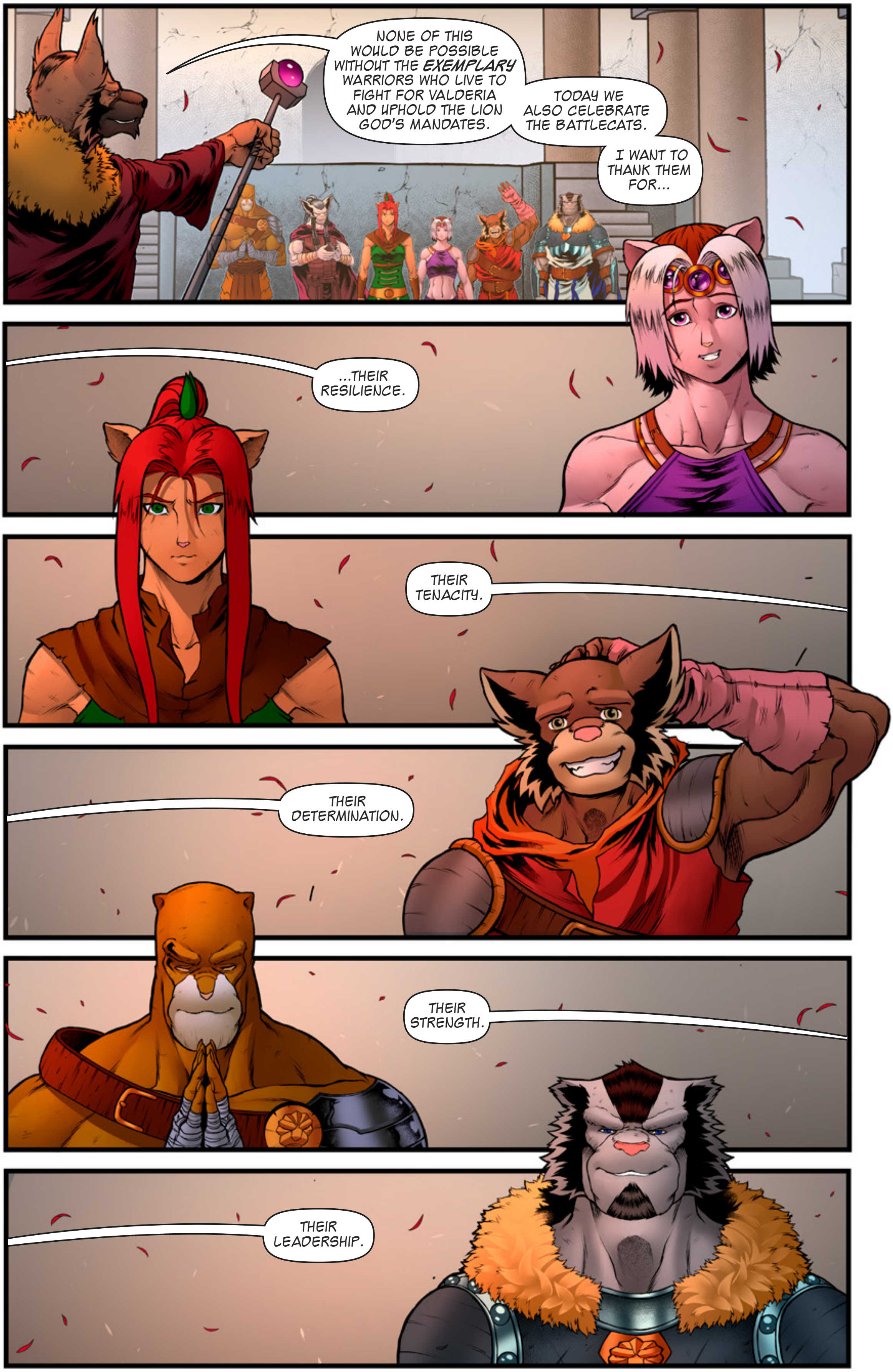

FROM THE DAY THE LION GOD BIRTHED VALDERIA, WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TESTED.
BUT *NOTHING* COMPARES TO WHAT WE WENT THROUGH ONE YEAR AGO.
REBUILDING VALDERIA HAS NOT BEEN EASY....
...BUT I KNOW THAT MY HUSBAND, KING ERAMAD III, IS SITTING NEXT TO HIS PREDECESSORS AND THE LION GOD.
TOGETHER, THEY ARE ALL SMILING DOWN ON US AND APPLAUDING US FOR OUR FIGHT TO UPHOLD THE LION GOD'S MANDATES.
THIS JOURNEY HAS HELPED US GROW AS VALDERIANS...
SHOULDN'T ARTAIN BE HERE BY NOW?
I KEEP TELLING YOU THAT YOU HAVE TOO MUCH FAITH IN HIM.
HE'S MORE THAN PROVEN HIMSELF.
HE'LL BE HERE.
LOWER YOUR VOICES.
ALL I'M SAYING IS WHAT COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THIS?

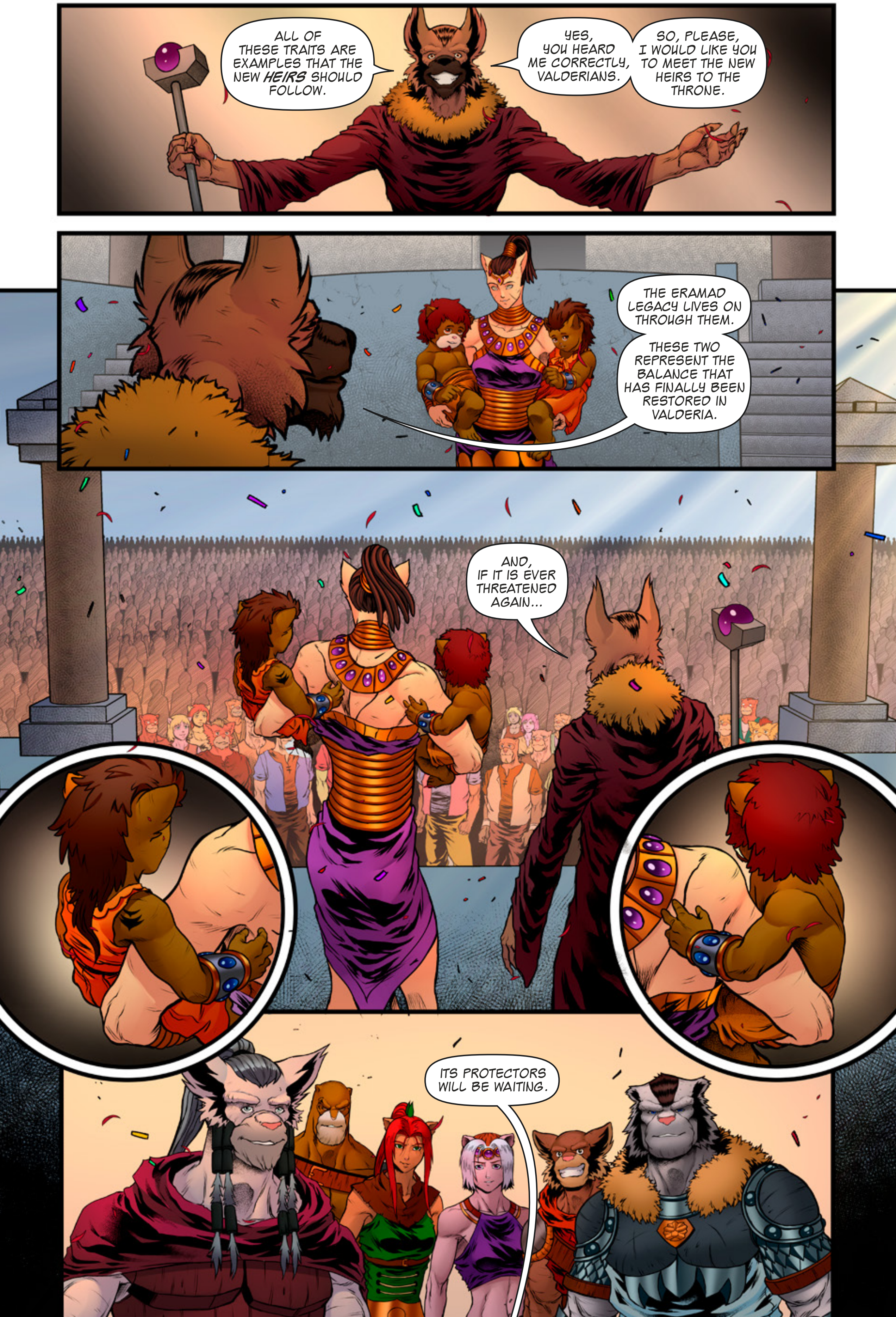

TODAY IS A BIG DAY FOR ME.
FOR VALDERIA.
A DAY TO REMEMBER ERAMAD AND WHY WE ARE HERE.
WHY KINGS AND HEROES FOUGHT SO HARD TO PROTECT THE KINGDOM.
I'D LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT YOU PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN YOUR PRIME.
WE LOST OUR CHANCE TO KNOW EACH OTHER, BROTHER, BUT I HOPE ONE DAY WE CAN CHANGE THAT.
AFTER ALL...

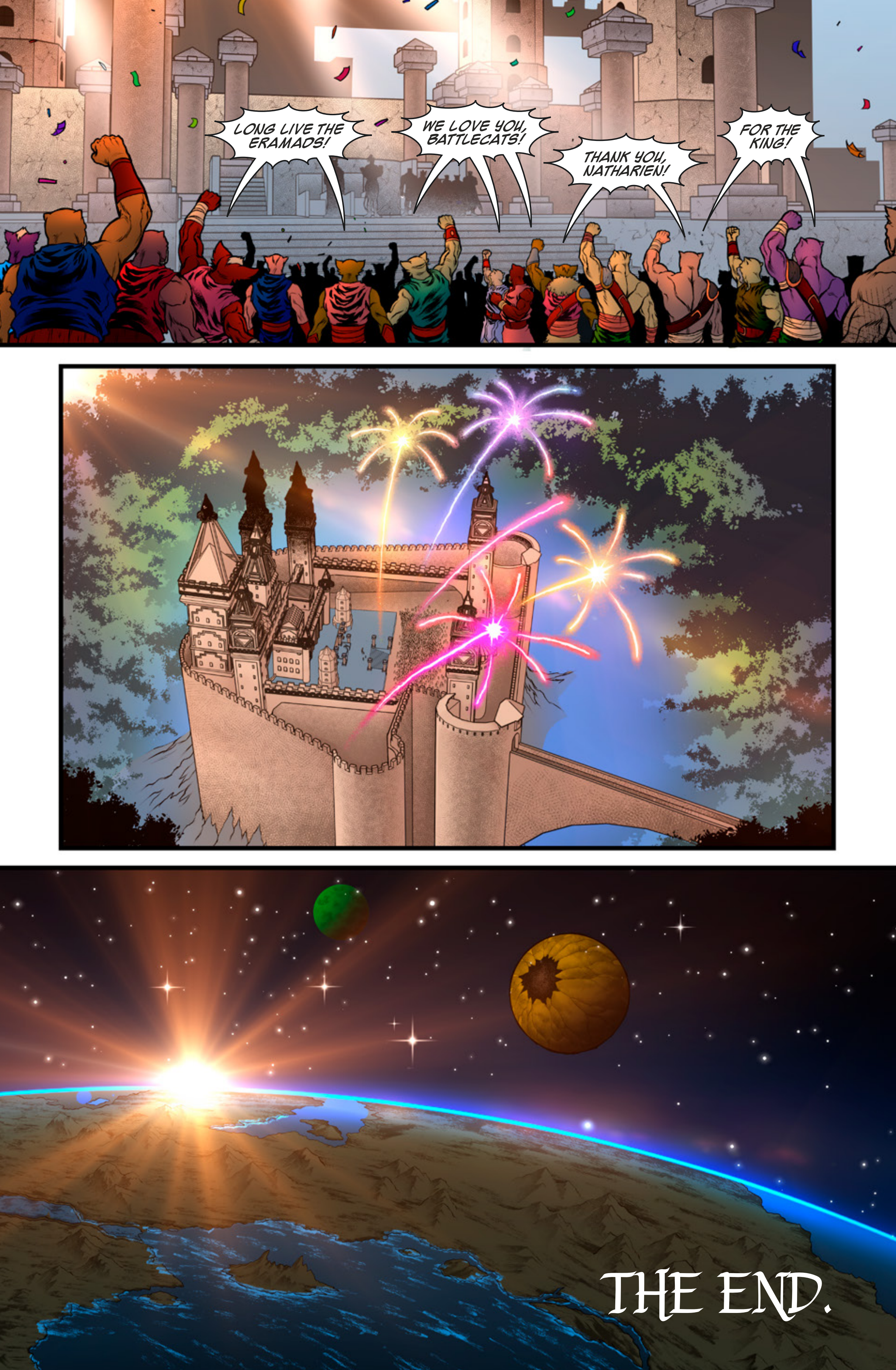

...WE ARE FAMILY.
RYIAH RYIAHRIAHRYIAH RYIAH
BROTHER?
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
⚞SIGH⚟
I'M EXPECTED AT THE CEREMONY, BUT I WILL BE BACK SOON.
I HOPE YOU FIND PEACE, VALADAR.
"I AM PROUD TO BE A VALDERIAN..."


...PROUD TO WALK THE PATH THE LION GOD HAS SET BEFORE US ALL.
I'M HERE.
CLEARLY.
AND NOW, THE ORACLE WHISPERER HAS A FEW WORDS FOR YOU.
THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.
I HAVE BEEN IN VALDERIA ALMOST SINCE ITS INCEPTION AND I HAVE LEARNED MANY THINGS IN MY TIME HERE.
ONE THAT STANDS OUT TO ME AT THIS VERY MOMENT IS THAT, SOMETIMES, CHANGE IS NECESSARY...


EFFECTIVE TODAY, I AM STEPPING DOWN AS ORACLE WHISPERER.
IT WAS ALWAYS INEVITABLE.
AND, PERHAPS, I HELD ON TO THE TITLE A LITTLE TOO LONG.
HOWEVER, I AM *CONFIDENT* THAT MY REPLACEMENT WILL LEARN FROM MY MISTAKES.
ARTAIN.
YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY THE LION GOD AS THE NEXT ORACLE WHISPERER.
VALDERIA!
MEET YOUR NEW ORACLE WHISPERER!
AW, CRAP.
ARTAIN, I DIDN'T MEAN ALL OF THAT STUFF BEFORE.
HIS HEART IS PURE AND HIS MIND SHARP.
HE PUT HIS LIFE ON THE LINE AND FOUGHT VALIANTLY FOR VALDERIA.
I'VE KNOWN HIM SINCE HE WAS A CUB AND I ASSURE YOU THAT VALDERIA WILL BE IN A BETTER PLACE WITH HIM IN MY STEAD.


NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE *EXEMPLARY* WARRIORS WHO LIVE TO FIGHT FOR VALDERIA AND UPHOLD THE LION GOD'S MANDATES.
TODAY WE ALSO CELEBRATE THE BATTLECATS.
I WANT TO THANK THEM FOR...
...THEIR RESILIENCE.
THEIR TENACITY.
THEIR DETERMINATION.
THEIR STRENGTH.
THEIR LEADERSHIP.


ALL OF THESE TRAITS ARE EXAMPLES THAT THE NEW ***HEIRS*** SHOULD FOLLOW.
YES, YOU HEARD ME CORRECTLY, VALDERIANS.
SO, PLEASE, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO MEET THE NEW HEIRS TO THE THRONE.
THE ERAMAD LEGACY LIVES ON THROUGH THEM.
THESE TWO REPRESENT THE BALANCE THAT HAS FINALLY BEEN RESTORED IN VALDERIA.
AND, IF IT IS EVER THREATENED AGAIN...
ITS PROTECTORS WILL BE WAITING.


LONG LIVE THE ERAMADS!
WE LOVE YOU, BATTLECATS!
THANK YOU, NATHARIEN!
FOR THE KING!
THE END.

MiKE Takino

Takino
MiKE

Takino
MiKE
Takino

BATTLECATS®

Battlecats Vol 3: Hero of legend. After the death of King Eramad III, Valderia is lost, and a perpetual state of violence has consumed the land. Valadar now sits on the throne and the Battlecats are without their leader, Kelthan. Now, Queen Adastril has taken charge of a resistance group, and her first order of business: recover the corpse of their fallen king. Secrets will be revealed, hearts will be changed, and Valderia will never be the same again.

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Fantasy / Adventure
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